

The Resurrection of our Lord – 2022

Job 19:23-27

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

John 20:1-18

O glorious Day! Splendor and triumph and elation and music and the glory of heaven. The Crucified King is risen. Life comes striding out of the tomb. “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55). The Lord Christ was laid in a borrowed garden tomb. Daughters of Eve went to the tomb to serve as morticians for the Seed of the woman, serving Jesus in death with spices and ointments they had prepared for His corpse (Luke 23:56). Despair and heartache ripped at their souls. They had seen such travesty, beheld such suffering, endured such loss. Divine love drew them to the tomb on that early Sunday morning. Heartache morphed to bewilderment; bewilderment became wide-eyed wonder; wide-eyed wonder gave way to impossible joy! Jesus lives! The Lord is risen! He is the Author of Life, the Author of new life! His body had been transformed, remodeled. The marks of death are still imprinted in His flesh. His love, His sacrifice, His victory is emblazoned on His hands, His feet, His side. He is the progenitor of a new creation. Light and Life to all He brings; Ris’n with healing in His wings.

A new body! Like His glorious body! What was sown perishable will be raised imperishable. How many of y'all would like a new body? Not simply new, like one that hasn't been used yet, but new qualitatively, new as in remarkable, heavenly, immortal? Alise and I are remodeling our house, or, better said, we're having our home remodeled. It hasn't been the most pleasant undertaking ever. The house is paid off, the kids are mostly gone, and the inside itself was pretty tired so it seemed time. So, let's say that you and I are transported in time back to January and I are chatting away and I tell you that I'm considering remodeling my house you want to show me some compassion, to assist me by providing advice or counsel... I beg you to say something like this: “Oh, Pastor, wouldn't you rather just gouge out your eyes?” “Or I could jam some toothpicks under your fingernails instead, wouldn't that be just as good?”

Scripture likens our bodies to dwellings – an earthly tent (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). How many of you are game for a remodel? It isn't as though we aren't fearfully and wonderfully made – we certainly are! A body and soul, fused into one mobile unit. We have a mind, an intellect that grasps truth. Our senses allow us to experience the fabulous world we inhabit. Emotion brings an added spectrum of delight to life. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. And sin is a great corruptor. Sin has invaded every corner of creation – all that God had made that was *very good* has been infected. Our bodies fail.

Let me tell you about three people, all of them members of our blessed congregation. One within our company has coped with these maladies: schizophrenia, anorexia, disabling neuropathy, diabetes, and skin cancer; her colon has been mostly removed due to bulimia; she has degenerative arthritis in her back and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. She is one of the most faithful women I have ever known. Another saint within our happy tribe had inflammation in his blood vessels that was so high that it was literally off the medical charts. His immune system revolted against his own body. The nerves in his body began to constrict as a weird defense mechanism, depriving his own nerves of oxygen. Pain, like putting frostbitten

limbs under hot water, was the product. He is one of the most faithful men I know. A third who belongs to Christ the King has severe rheumatoid and osteoarthritis as well as a radical immune deficiency which requires weekly injections lasting hours. The capper is that she has had to have rods implanted in her spine from neck to waist due to disc degeneration. She is one of the most faithful women I know. Our bodies fail; some more than others. This earthly tent will not last. We need to be remodeled.

We sin in this body. Our hearts and minds are bent, selfish. In sin did our mothers conceive us (Psalm 51:5). We have added to what we inherited from Adam and Eve. Our bodies must be remodeled. Our soul, our heart – we are corrupt (Jeremiah 17:9). St. Paul speaks for us all when he writes this: “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is in my sinful flesh” (Romans 7:18). I’ve seen the bones of my house and the cosmetic fixes taking place. I’ve seen the rot in my humanity. There is no spiritual spackle to smear on my soul, no duct tape, no jerry-rigging my heart and mind to make me imperishable, holy, blessed, and good. Remodeling? I have to be made new!

The Son of God took upon Himself a body. God made our flesh His dwelling place. No human paternity; He is conceived by the Holy Spirit but He took His flesh from the Virgin. God humbled Himself and took the form of a servant. So very like you; the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father was made man. To save your body, to save everything that you are, Jesus was remodeled. He was perfect, without sin, holy and good and the truest expression of man. And He subjected Himself to sin’s radical corruption. He was remodeled by spikes and thorns and whips and a lance in His side. On the Holy Cross, this innocent substitute was saturated by the sin of man – every man, every sin, every just punishment – God’s Son took it. Death; God’s Son took it into His body; not some death; not most death; all of it! Christ redeemed us from the curse of death by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’

Jesus dies because He wills to make all things NEW! Christ’s death and resurrection is the melody which God will sing when He creates a new heaven and a new earth. The sublime notes of Christ crucified will hang in the air as you are drawn from your grave. You will be new; qualitatively. What was sown perishable will be raised imperishable. What was sown in dishonor will be raised in glory. What was sown in weakness will be raised in power (1 Corinthians 15:42-43). Easter is the exclamation point of life that has already been placed into your soul. Believer that you are, believer, you are even now a citizen of the new creation which has yet to be. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The remedy for our sin, the remedy for our corruption and the failings of our bodies – that remedy is in full view today. The Lord is alive. The tomb is shattered. Death has been defeated and life is the Victor. A new creation is in the Savior’s resurrected body. And we shall be like Him. The body He possesses, we get to have. The body He chose, the body He reworked, refashioned for Himself is what awaits us. Listen to this: “Our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject all things to himself” (Philippians 3:21).

For those of you who know and love our happy congregation, I invite you to think of three other saints, three other integral members of our faithful fellowship: Matthew, Annie, and Kelli Townsend. Already now they have been remodeled by the blood of Christ which has washed them and made them holy. But they will be transformed, perfected. I see them already, in my mind's eye, as they will be in heaven – radiant, regal, renewed. The love they have known here, being ministered to by Christ, that love will change them, in a twinkling of the eye, at the last trumpet and they will be glorious, reflecting His glory in their body, in their mind, in their soul (1 Corinthians 15:52).

The risen Christ shares His victory. His life extends far and wide and these three will be made new. The joy we share *this* day will be part of our celebration on *that* day. All of us, refashioned, gloriously alive, the cup of our hearts will be running over with the thrill of being made new. Job is our Old Testament pastor this Easter day. He shepherds us to Christ. “I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job 19:26-27).

The new wine of that eternal kingdom, the new wine which flowed from the new wine skin of Christ crucified is on our altar. He wills to share His newness with you, to convey to you His death defeating victory, to give you a taste of His eternal redemption, a feast of forgiveness and a reminder of how deeply He loves you. It is a miraculous thing. Christ is risen from the dead, you are swept up in His triumph and, by death and resurrection, you are made new.