**#53 Why the Resurrection Matters (15v12-19)**

4 weeks on Resn leading up to Easter: Resn Sunday.

Picture: what is it?

* Chinese culture: no problem – delicious treat.
* British culture: vile - repulsive!
  + What we believe: more culturally conditioned than we like to think.
* Spiritual matters: What we find easy – hard to believe – affected by culture.
  + Western world
    - Easy to believe in a God of love – God who is kind.
    - Struggle w idea: God of justice – wrath – demands on us.
  + V different picture: Rwanda: 1994 – 3/4M ppl of the Tutsi tribe were murdered by ruling Hutu tribe. Every bit as horrific & violent as Nazi Germany[[1]](#endnote-1).
    - God of justice: easy – like justice – wrath – greatest passion!
    - God of love: how?
* Belief in Corinth – culturally conditioned too – resn. Greek thinking:
  + Plato: Body like a prison for Sp – when die – Sp set free[[2]](#endnote-2). I am a spirit shackled to a corpse[[3]](#endnote-3). Soul-Sp is important bit – eternal bit. Believed in immortality of soul.
    - Death: release. Last thing you want: get ur body back.
  + Know b well: **Acts 17** P in Athens debating with Stoic philosophers. 1Cor just down road from Athens.
    - The Stoics believed: divine was a fire, and humans have a “divine spark” from our maker. But when death comes, that “divine spark” returns back to divinity – b/c part of the divine again.
    - So aim: get rid of body: so divine spark can return to creator.
    - So P starts talking about resn of body – describe them as strange ideas (Acts 17:20) and some of them sneered (Acts 17:32) – clash w their worldview.
* Some – Cor ch – believed that J had risen from dead – but did not believe in a resn of the dead for all ppl.
  + Whole of ch15 is making the case that resn of the dead is vital – w/o that idea - /have a gospel - /good news. Next 3 wks.
  + Last wk: Died for sins – buried – raised – witnessed by hundreds. All agree on.
  + Tonight: Why Resn really matters.
    - Pointing out a huge flaw in their logic. Trying to carry this belief through from your culture – when in fact: totally wrong – devastating.
* **v12** if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **v13** If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.
  + Saying: /have it both ways:
    - Either J rose from the dead so resn is a thing.
    - Or J did not rise from the dead: and resn is /thing.
    - Not logical to believe in J’s resn but /in our own.
  + But if resn /thing, huge implications: 3 points: If resn /happen:
    - preaching is pointless (v14-15)
    - faith is futile (v17)
    - hope is hollow (v18-19)

**If the resurrection didn’t happen, preaching is pointless (v14-15)**

**v14** if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless… **v15** More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead.

* This – church – all about Jesus. Website.
  + All about him. Sing – pray to him – meet in small groups to do BS about him – loooong sermons about him.
* But if he wasn’t raised from dead – just some bloke – wise, clever, kind. Lots of them around.
  + So if /raised: preaching is pointless – praise is empty – waste of time.
* More than that: All false witnesses – all the apostles – Peter - James – 500. All lied.
  + All lying to each other – preachers who stand @ front - just perpetuating a myth. All pointless is J: dead.
* Tim Keller: *If Jesus rose from the dead you have to accept all he said, if he didn’t rise from the dead then why worry about anything he said? If Jesus rose from the dead, it changes everything[[4]](#endnote-4).*
  + Everything hangs on the resn of J.
* **But resurrection does happen!**

**v20** But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

* + Worship J – b/c resn: demonstrated once and for all: God.
  + So our preaching is useful – b/c what could be a better use of our time than learning about – reminding ourselves - enjoying the presence of – God.
    - If resn is true: most important thing ever to happen in human history – should constantly remind each other!
    - Should sing songs – memorise scripture – preach – BS.

**If the resurrection didn’t happen, faith is futile (v17)**

**v17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

* Can say you have faith in him – but that faith is futile if he’s dead – put all your faith & trust in him – can be most faith-filled follower of J - but the object of your faith is a failure.
  + He’s a liar – and a failure.
  + If X is /raised – faith in him is futile.
    - And that means you’re still in your sins - /saved from them at all.
* Imagine if X /raised: /Confident saved?
  + If J /literally raised from dead – we /be certain that he finished the work of dying for sins.
    - His resn shows there is /dying left for sins. He has finished dying for sin – come out other side – so /penalty - /punishment left for me to bear.
    - How can I have any assurance that he aid the penalty for sin if he’s dead. How can I ever be sure there’s not some penalty left for me. If sin ended him, maybe it will end me too. /Bet eternity on a dead man.
    - When God raised his S from the dead, he was proclaiming to the whole world: he has done everything – he has fulfilled every demand[[5]](#endnote-5).
  + Death & resn together -> justification: declared innocent. Both.
    - But more than justification: morally neutral. Far more: gives us righteousness too. He takes the sin accumulated in our life.
    - Imputes to us the righteousness earned in his life.
  + Adrian Warnock: *“Jesus was so full of merit that not only did he have enough righteousness to cancel out our sin and enough that he deserved to be raised from the dead, but he still had abundantly more credit in his account.[[6]](#endnote-6)”*
* Eg[[7]](#endnote-7): think of sin: huge overdraft. Take you an eternity to pay off - / - /hope. J comes along – offers to take over account – pay off unpayable debt. So grateful. Amazing.
  + Goes step further: one day realise it’s a joint account. You have access to his own account. So much in there: /matter whatever spend - now on: never be in debt again. Always have a massive balance.
  + Whatever sin might commit now – always have an infinite balance of goodness in ur account – J’s goodness – his righteousness – counted as if it’s yours.
* **v20** But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!
  + So he has shown that the penalty for sin is fully paid – he has plenty in his account to give to us
  + So our faith in him /futile – far from it: vital – essential – our only hope of being saved from our sins.

**If the resurrection didn’t happen, hope is hollow (v18-19)**

**v18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. **v19** If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

* If resn /happen – then J was /raised – God /accept his sacrifice – so faith is futile – still in your sins – and B says that those who die in sins: lost – go to hell – if J /pay penalty – pay it yourself.
  + /Resn: all those who have put their faith in X: futile gesture – all going to hell anyway.
  + All those gone before us – friends – relatives – ppl followed X down ages – heroes of Bible – OT – all in hell. All who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.
* And what a waste of a life following X is:
  + trying to be obedient to scripture – battling against sin – generous w money – w time – kind to ppl. What a waste of effort.
  + If only for this life we have hope – we are of all people most to be pitied. If all end up in hell anyway – following X – most pitiful ppl on whole earth b/c deceived – created a hard life for nothing.
    - So if J was /raised: there is no gospel - /good news.
* **v20** But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!
  + So those whohave fallen asleep in Christ have done just that: fallen asleep.
    - Every night: curl up in bed – every expectation that you will wake to a new day.
    - Those who call asleep in X – who die in X – have that same expectation - certainty: fully expect to wake up to a new day.
* Everything hangs on resn: w/o it - /hope - /gospel: dead in sin & most pitiful ppl on earth.
* But X has been raised – X conquered death – gone ahead of us – he’s the firstfruits – the very first little bit of the vast harvest - so we have every expectation of doing same.
  + If X was raised – then sin can be fully atoned for – sin can be fully forgiven – we can be freed from sin – we are /false witnesses – we are ppl w good news – gospel ppl – and preaching is vital – to tell ppl how they can have a strong & certain hope /just for this life – but for eternity.
  + Every difficulty – every sacrifice – every cup of water given in the name of X - /forgotten – b/c this life – w all it’s troubles – struggles – only a moment in eternity – blink of an eye. Eternal life w X beckons.
    - Believe that this evening?
    - Trusting in risen X to take you home – fall asleep in him?
    - Believe: rose from dead – prove punishment for sin fully paid?
  + /Xn? XE
  + Baptism?

Resource:

Warnock, Adrian. Raised With Christ. Crossway, 2010.

1. The Wikipedia article is deeply sobering: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwandan_genocide> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. I think it’s actually a lot more complicated than this, and varies considerably over time, and between Greek thinkers. But certainly this kind of idea was common. “The soul's union with the body is not its natural state; in fact, the whole point of philosophy is to prepare the soul for its release from the "prison" of the body.” <https://science.jrank.org/pages/10723/Philosophy-Mind-Ancient-Medieval-Ancient-Greek-Roman-Views.html>   
   Another longer source here: <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/actat/article/viewFile/52560/41166> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. One thing I don’t understand is why the Greeks so idolised the body if they also believed it was just a “tomb for the spirit”? [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Keller, T. Reason For God. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. This is a paraphrase of Martyn Lloyd-Jones sermon, quoted in Warnock, p125. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Warnock, p126 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Similar to Warnock’s illustration, p126. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)