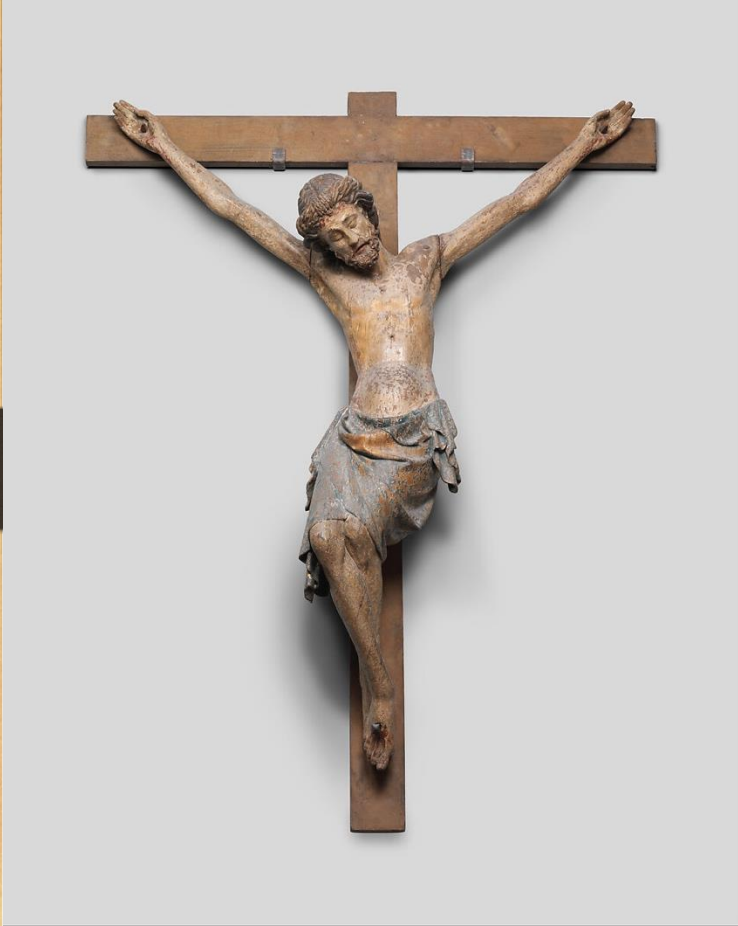


WELCOME!

*“REDISCOVERING
the RESURRECTION”*

“REDISCOVERING the RESURRECTION”

- **March 30:** What in the World is “Resurrection”?
(no class April 6 -- Children’s Musical)
- **April 13:** The Resurrection of Jesus
(no class April 20 -- Easter Sunday)
- **April 27:** Our Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15) and
the Call to Resurrection Life (Romans 6)



REDISCOVERING RESURRECTION

- Every page of the New Testament either explicitly proclaims or is implicitly grounded in belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there would be no Christianity.

APOSTLES CREED

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy, catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, *the resurrection of the body*, and the life everlasting.

TODAY'S CLASS

1. What “resurrection” is and is not
2. The early Church’s misunderstanding of resurrection
3. The Jewish history of resurrection
4. Resurrection at the time of Jesus
5. Assorted photos of our grandchild

...TREADING LIGHTLY...



1. WHAT “RESURRECTION” IS NOT

OR:

***Common Misunderstandings of Resurrection
(Some That We Really, Really Like)***

**ST. GILES
CATHEDRAL
EASTER 1992
&
THE GREAT
WORSHIP
REBELLION**



WHAT “RESURRECTION” IS NOT...

“Resurrection” is not the natural renewal of life or the cycle of nature

➤ Fresh Air podcast, October 28, 2024

WHAT “RESURRECTION” IS NOT

Ask the first 20 people you pass on the street after worship today: *“What do you believe will happen to you after you die?”*

Likely Answers?

Resurrection is not about an immortal soul...

Resurrection is about the resurrection of the **body** --
Christianity does not believe humans intrinsically possess an immortal soul.

FREDERICK BUECHNER

Immortal means death-proof. To believe in the immortality of the soul is to believe that though John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, his soul goes marching on simply because marching on is the nature of souls just the way producing apples is the nature of apple trees. Bodies die, but souls don't.

True or false, this is not the biblical view, although many who ought to know better assume it is. The biblical view differs in several significant ways.

Buechner: Immortality vs. Resurrection

As someone has put it, the biblical understanding of man is not that he *has* a body but that he *is* a body. When God made Adam, he did it by slapping some mud together to make a body and then breathing some breath into it to make a living soul. **Thus the body and soul which make up a man are as inextricably part and parcel of each other as the leaves and flames that make up a bonfire.** When you kick the bucket, you kick it one hundred per cent. All of you. There is nothing left to go marching on with.

Buechner: Immortality vs. Resurrection

Those who believe in the immortality of the soul believe that life after death is as natural a function of man as digestion after a meal.

The Bible instead speaks of resurrection. It is entirely unnatural. Man does not go on living beyond the grave because that's how he is made. **Rather, he goes to his grave as dead as a doornail and is given his life back again by God (i.e., resurrected) just as he was given it by God in the first place, because that is the way God is made.**

SO WHAT IS RESURRECTION?

Resurrection is an unexpected, surprising, supernatural miracle – it is an act of God.

In the Bible's usage, "resurrection" means the future re-vivification & transformation of one's entire person -- **body AND soul.**

Through resurrection, God acts to defeat, reverse and transcend what death appeared to accomplish (*the destruction of our life, body and soul*).

**QUESTIONS
&
COMMENTS?**



2. THE EARLY CHURCH

**HOW “RESURRECTION”
BECAME CONFUSED WITH
“THE IMMORTALITY OF
THE SOUL”**



THE CHURCH BECOMES GENTILE

- By the early 100s, the Christian Church was overwhelmingly composed of Gentile converts.
- The Church's connection with Judaism was strained during the political cataclysms in Jerusalem in 70 AD and 132 AD (the Romans sacked Jerusalem twice).

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY BECAME GREEK-BASED

By the mid second century, all the leading bishops and theologians were Gentile born & bred.

- They affirmed the Gospel's roots in Judaism (Marcion)
- Also: Evangelistic considerations led to down-playing the “Jewish” aspects of Christianity.

“THE BODY IS THE PRISON-HOUSE OF THE SOUL”

This is especially true for “resurrection of the body” --
“resurrection” is not a Greek way of thinking about
human nature or the afterlife.

Immortal Soul vs. Bodily Resurrection

Soul-body dichotomy is deeply inbred in Greek thinking.

“The body is the good creation of God” is Jewish thinking

EARLY CHURCH RE-DIRECTION

By the years 180-220,
the Church had changed its understanding
of the resurrection.

FREDERICK BUECHNER

The idea that the body dies and the soul doesn't is an idea which implies that the body is something rather gross and embarrassing, like a case of hemorrhoids. The Greeks spoke of it as the prison house of the soul. The suggestion was that to escape it altogether was something less than a disaster.

The Bible, on the other hand, sees the body in particular and the material world in general as a good and glorious invention.

**QUESTIONS
&
COMMENTS?**



3. THE JEWISH CONTEXT OF RESURRECTION

LITTLE HOPE FOR LIFE AFTER DEATH IN OT

- OT is concerned about the future destiny of God's people, not individual Jews
- God created us mortal, we live within physical limits (Psalm 90:10)
- God's blessings in human life are: health (long life), prosperity, family & children, being of good repute

“SHEOL”

In the Old Testament, “living on in the memory of one’s descendants” is the dominant view of “life after death.”

- *“May her memory be for a blessing”*

The next most prominent view expressed in the Old Testament is that, upon death, one’s shade descends to Sheol, where one remains forever in a shadowy existence, cut off from God’s presence.

“SHEOL”

Sheol consisted of a vast underground region, dark and dusty. What characterized Sheol was that it was peopled by shades whose existence – which shared nothing in common with the life that had been led formerly – unfolds without purpose and without communication. The dead are the “forgotten ones” (Ps 88:13); they have no contact with the world of the living and still less with the living God (Ps 6:6; 30:10; 88:6-12)

“METAPHORICAL” RESURRECTION in the OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The dry bones coming to life is a vision of the future restoration of God's people following exile in Babylon.



INTER-TESTAMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

THEOLOGY & CRISIS

Jewish resistance against

- forced Hellenization (200s BC) and
- the Maccabean revolt (170-140 BC)

raised the theological question of God's justice: Is there no reward for the faithful martyrs?

A THEOLOGY OF “RESURRECTION” DEVELOPS

Assumptions:

- God is the Creator, the giver of life
- God is the Lord of life, sovereign over death
- God is the Judge who holds His creation accountable
- God is Almighty, who can effect what justice requires
- God’s covenant faithfulness extends beyond the nation Israel to individual Jews

A THEOLOGY OF “RESURRECTION” DEVELOPS

- 2 Maccabees (2nd cent BC): Martyrs who remained faithful will be vindicated by restoration to life
- Psalms of Solomon (1st cent BC) – The righteous “will rise to eternal life”

**QUESTIONS
&
COMMENTS?**



4. RESURRECTION AT THE TIME OF JESUS



BELIEF IN RESURRECTION IN JESUS' TIME

- Many Jews (not all) believed in the resurrection of the body
- They believed resurrection was a future event, when God would culminate His purposes for the world and His people.

JOHN 5:27-29

“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear [the Son of God’s] voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.”

BUECHNER on RESURRECTION

All the major Christian creeds affirm belief in resurrection *of the body*. In other words they affirm the belief that what God in spite of everything prizes enough to bring back to life is not just some disembodied echo of a human being but a new and revised version of all the things which made him the particular human being he was and which he needs something like a body to express: **his personality, the way he looked, the sound of his voice, his peculiar capacity for creating and loving, in some sense his *face*.**

Buechner: Immortality vs. Resurrection

The idea of the immortality of the soul is based on the experience of man's indomitable spirit.

The idea of the resurrection of the body is based on the experience of God's unspeakable love.

BUT THEN ...

HE IS NOT HERE
HE IS RISEN!

... and
resurrection got
re-thought again



Resurrection



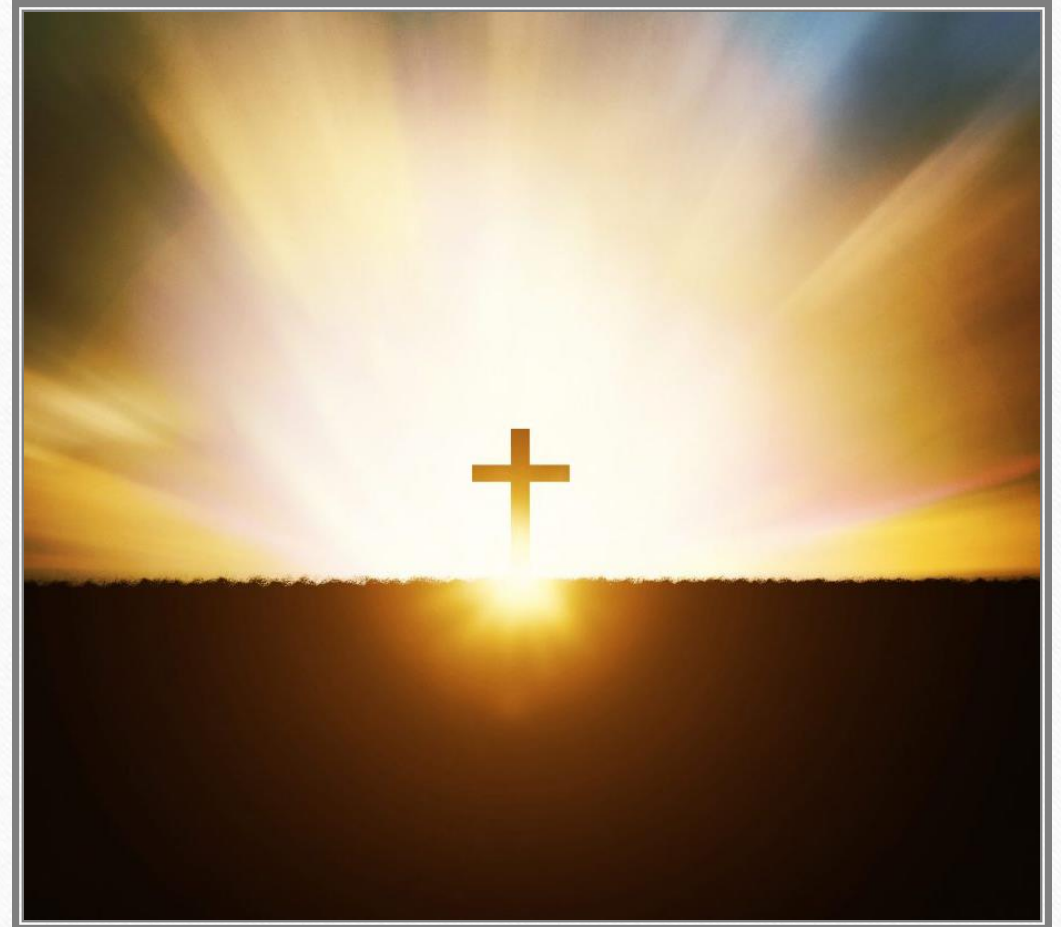
Rescue!

**QUESTIONS
&
COMMENTS?**



NEXT CLASS (APRIL 13)

- How Christianity rethought resurrection in light of Jesus' resurrection
- The four Gospel resurrection stories



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