

Guest Preacher - Rev Roddy John Campbell

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Preacher: Rev. RJ Campbell

[0 : 00] 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and reading at verse 3. Now this morning we reflected upon the fact of the death and the burial of Christ.

That it was for our sins in accordance with the scriptures. This evening I would like to focus especially on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And its implications for me and you to bring us assurance regarding our own burial and resurrection. We noted this morning that his death was a covenant death, a sacrificial death, a substitutionary death, a penal death, a planned and an effective death.

But this evening we would like to focus upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ as we have it here in the words of Paul.

Who came to the grave.

[2 : 36] He is not here but has risen. We find Jesus in the body of his resurrection.

While before this in the morning as we reflected upon the death and burial of Christ, there we have Jesus in the body of his humiliation.

But he is now in the body of his resurrection. It was a true body. Capable of being touched and of eating and drinking.

But also capable of appearing and disappearing and passing through locked doors. Jesus after his resurrection had various encounters with his disciples.

They are all spread for us throughout the gospels. And these encounters gives us the most reliable testimony of the resurrection.

[3 : 34] For they were eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus. At first they were quite single and doubtful. And it took some convincing for them to believe in the resurrection of the body.

Luke records for us in the book of Acts. That he presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs. Appearing to them for 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

It is interesting as Luke records for us that when he met the two disciples that was going to Emmaus. Instead of Jesus pointing to his body and saying, Luke, this is me.

He pointed them to the scriptures. To his own word. Just like the angels did to the woman. He is not here.

He has risen. Remember how he told you. And here in the text this evening. Paul is telling us that he has risen from the dead according to the scriptures.

[4 : 51] One would have thought that the risen Jesus would be independent of the scriptures. But no. In his life and death, he fulfilled all scripture.

And now as the risen Lord, he turns to the scriptures to teach the two disciples that was going to the village of Emmaus.

Jesus was emphasizing that the word of scripture should be enough for them. As it should be enough for me and you.

We read there in Luke that the two Emmaus disciples invited a stranger to dinner. Not realizing that the man they invited to dinner was Jesus.

For we are told that their eyes were kept from recognizing him. Well, what kept their eyes? Perhaps it was their unbelief.

[5 : 49] For as yet they did not believe in the resurrection. Maybe they failed to recognize him because they never expected to see him again.

But Mark informs us that he appeared to them in another forum. Whatever Mark means by that. But the last time they saw Jesus, his body was battered and bruised.

And his face would have been puffed up. Could it be that all the bruising and swelling had disappeared from his body? We know that he still had the prints of the nails in his hands and feet

and the gash made by the spear in his side.

But more on that in a moment. However, we are told that when he was at table with them, he took bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

And we are told that their eyes were opened. And they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. Now something unusual took place at this dinner table.

[7:01] Usually it was the host that would offer a blessing and break bread. But here it is the guest that asks a blessing and breaks bread.

Some say that perhaps when he broke the bread that they saw the prints of the nails. Others that there was something characteristic about the way Jesus blessed the bread.

That the disciples immediately recognized him. Or it may be that the recognition came through the power of the Holy Spirit. For it says that their eyes were opened.

Which indicates that the disciples did not open their eyes for themselves. And they knew now that Jesus was alive. They did not waste another moment.

For we read that they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. What a different walk for them now as they made their journey back to Jerusalem. In contrast to when they had previously left Jerusalem.

[8:08] And they found the eleven. And those who were with them gathered saying, The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon. They said that the risen Jesus had appeared to Simon Peter.

This personal encounter that Peter had with the risen Jesus is not recorded for us. Although Paul makes mention of it here in his first letter to the Corinthians.

However, while the two Emmaus disciples were telling the other disciples that the Lord had risen. And telling them what happened on the road. Now, and how he was known to them in the breaking of bread.

We are told that Jesus himself stood among them. And said to them, Peace to you. And they were startled. And frightened. And thought they saw a spirit.

It was hard for the disciples to believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ. As it is for anyone. They thought they were seeing a spirit.

[9:15] The body that rose from the tomb was a body with extraordinary abilities. It could suddenly appear and disappear. And could pass even through locked doors.

And he said to them, Why are you troubled? And why do doubt arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet.

That it is I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones. As you see that I have. And when he had said this, He showed them his hands and his feet.

Still with the prints of the nails. One final proof. Jesus asked, Have you anything here to eat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish.

And he took it and ate before them. And here this was proof of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Proof to them that he was not a spirit.

[10:17] That he was not a ghost. Peter later referred to this meal when he preached as recorded for us in the book of Acts chapter 10. Where he spoke and said that they put him to death by hanging him on a tree.

But God raised him on the third day and made him to appear. Not to all the people, but to us who has been chosen by God as witnesses.

Who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He showed them his hands and his feet. And they plainly displayed the marks of his crucifixion. The wounds that pierced his hands and feet were no longer bleeding.

They were healed, yet they were still visible. So when the disciples saw them, they knew that it was Jesus himself.

[11:16] There was no doubt whatsoever in their mind. The same Jesus that died on the cross was now standing before them with the marks of the crucifixion on his body.

In another appearance eight days later, he said to Thomas, Put your finger here and see my hand and put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.

And Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

You see, at this point of time, here is Christ and he is ministering to Thomas. Still bearing the marks of crucifixion. So we had in the morning talking about the body of his humiliation. Now we have the body of his resurrection. Many ask, will the marks of the crucifixion remain on the body of Christ?

[12 : 28] Some believe that the will as a permanent reminder of everything he has done for our salvation. But we must remember that the resurrected body of Christ had not yet been glorified, which took place, I believe, in his ascension.

I believe that the body of Christ in glory do not bear the marks of the crucifixion, although his resurrected body did bear those marks.

The resurrected body bore those marks to accommodate his disciples, his troubled disciples, to uphold and to support and defend two great facts, that Jesus died and then in the same body that he rose again.

I don't think that in heaven we need to be reminded of that fact. For here we walk by faith, but in heaven we shall walk by sight.

So I like to think of the body of Christ's humiliation and the body of his resurrection and the body of his glorification in which he now resides at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

[13 : 50] Remember the vision that John had of Christ on the Isle of Patmos in Revelation chapter 1.

Now John knew Jesus. He knew him in the body of his humiliation and he knew him in the body of his resurrection. But when the vision was shown to him in Revelation chapter 1, he fell down at the feet of Christ.

He fell down because there he saw such a glory. He saw Christ in his glory and he fell down as if he was dead.

Christ was the one whom Paul encountered on the road to Damascus. For we read, Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him and falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And he said, Who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. And writing to the church at Philippi, Paul wrote, But our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body, or as it is in the King James Version, our vile body, who will transform our lowly body to be made like what?

[15 : 38] To be made like his glorious body. Not like the body of his humiliation or like his resurrected body, but like his glorious body.

This is precisely the kind of body that believers will inherit in the resurrection. The importance of holding on to the fact of Christ's resurrection, among other things, is what Paul brings before us in verse 17.

He says, If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins.

You see, Paul expresses surprise in verse 12 and 13, that any who have been made acquainted with the fact of Christ's resurrection and with the evidence of the fact should have embraced a doctrine which denied that there is or can be such a thing as the literal resurrection of the body. Now he says, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

[17 : 15] He is asking them and us to consider what the effect this will have on our Christian life and experience if the resurrection of Christ is denied.

It is not simply that a historical testimony is set aside, but the whole gospel which we preach and you believe is made empty and pointless.

If Christ has not risen, then it is pointless for me to continue this evening. It is pointless for me to preach the gospel because there is no good news.

There is no gospel unless Christ has risen from the dead. If Christ, says Paul, has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

If Christ has not risen, it is just as well for me to leave and go home and for you to go home because there is no gospel. There is no good news.

[18 : 30] There is no hope for sinners like me and you. There is no hope for mankind.

Not only so, but there was no resurrection on the third day and the tomb was not found empty of the body of Christ or if the disciples had stolen his body or they had made up for stories regarding his

resurrection, then, says Paul, we are found to be false preachers.

We are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God that he raised Christ whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

what is more important is the bearing of the denial of Christ's resurrection on our spiritual state. A denial of Christ's resurrection cuts up by the roots the entire gospel and any hope of man's recovery from sin.

Verse 16 and 17. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

[20 : 08] Then the apostle points to the consequences upon those Christians who have died. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

Now the apostle here is not saying that they have ceased to exist. The question of the continued existence of mankind is not raised here in the apostle's argument in this chapter.

He is not saying that they must have perished in the sense of ceasing to exist. what the apostle has in you here as those who have fallen asleep in Christ is not perishing in the sense of ceasing to exist either in the body or out of the body but they're perishing in the sense of them not being saved.

In the sense of them being lost. So what he is saying is that they also which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

if there is no resurrection of Christ then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. They're not saved. They're lost.

[21 : 24] So that Paul is bringing before them and us a far more solemn and awful conclusion that they are not to live again in the body or that they are not to survive and live after death at all.

what he is bringing before us is the awful conclusion that they are lost that they have perished that they are not saved.

this statement regarding those who have fallen asleep in Christ is immediately connected with the statement that he has made concerning those who are living.

and if Christ has not been raised you who still live and although you believe in Christ your faith is futile and you are still in your sins you have not been forgiven.

if Christ has not been raised then those believers although they fell asleep in Christ they must have died in their sins and must even now be in their sins reaping their fruit and condemnation and out of ruin and that forever.

[22 : 47] If Christ be not raised you now believe in vain you believe in one who cannot save you from your sins seeing that he is not himself saved from them and your friends who have fallen asleep in Christ they have believed in vain they fell asleep believing in one who could not save them they are lost finally they have perished but then you see the apostle is working out his argument there in verse 19 he is saying if in Christ we have hope in this life only we are of all people most to be pitied the hope that Paul is speaking of here is not the hope of the resurrection not even the hope of immortality but the hope which has for its object the pardon of our sins it is the hope of the person whose sins have been found out but who have come in repentance and with the eye of faith has fixed his eye on Jesus as lifted up on the cross as a sacrifice for sin that we spoke of this morning he died for our sins according to the scripture but if he has not risen then he is still bearing in the tomb he is still bearing our sins however if in this life if for this life only we are of all people to be pitied if the one to whom I have laid upon my trust as dying for my sins may after all have not risen from the tomb if my sins are still upon him keeping his body in the tomb if the grave has triumphed if

Christ is not raised and they have believed on him for the remission of their sins are in their sins still and die in their sins and perish in their sins! What better is my hope than that of the hypocrite brought before us in Job chapter 27 for what is the hope of the godless when God casts him off when God takes away his life but you see in verse 20 here Paul gives us our assurance but in fact he says Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep you know the Bible is about the redemptive plan of God and there is much focus therefore here in the New Testament on the resurrection of believers nevertheless the

Bible makes it clear that everyone who has ever lived will be raised to stand in their bodies before the final judgment Daniel in the Old Testament speaks of this in chapter 12 where he says and many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt and Jesus was more forceful in the chapter that we read earlier on

in the gospel of John chapter 5 for he said for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment we are told that all who are in the tombs all who are in the graves will hear his voice and they will come out echoed by

Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians where Paul writes for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command with the voice of the arch angel and with the sound of the trumpet of God and if we make reference again to John in the isle of Patmos in the revelation given to him he informs us that all mankind saved and unsaved will stand before Jesus to be separated in the judgment he says and I saw the dead great and small standing before the throne and the books were opened then another book was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done and the sea gave up the dead who were in it death and hate gave up the dead who were in them and they were judged each one of them according to what they had done it is clear from these statements that while believers and unbelievers will alike be raised from the dead their experience will be very different they will experience radically different results

Jesus said when the son of man comes in his glory and all the angels with him then he will sit on his glorious throne and before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats this indicates for us that immediately after the resurrection there will be the final judgment you see Jesus always brings these and combines these events together that is to happen his return the resurrection of the dead the general resurrection of the dead and judgment he brings all these things together the resurrection is the work of the omnipotence it comes about with the authority and all the powerful act of God as Paul there reminded us for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command with the voice of an archangel and with the sound of the trumpet of

[29 : 32] God realizing this should relieve any concerns that a person may have over how bodies long decayed or wherever our bodies may rest can be raised for the God who commanded all things out of nothing no barriers can frustrate prevent or hinder the almighty in raising our bodies out of the dust of the earth from which he created the first man we can see this power at work in the raising of Lazarus Martha the sister of the dead man said him Lord by this time there will be an order for he has been dead four days and Jesus said to her did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God so they took away the stone and

Jesus lifted up his eyes and said father I thank you that you have heard me I knew that you always hear me but I said this on account of the people standing around that they may believe that you sent me and when he had said these things he cried out with a loud voice Lazarus come out and the man who had died and was dead four days came out his hands and feet bound linen strips! But there is a vital difference between the future resurrection and the way in which the dead were brought alive during the ministry of Jesus.

Lazarus when Jesus called Lazarus back from the grave Lazarus received his old body back to life with all its flaws with all its limitations with all the mortality that belonged to it before long Lazarus would die again we see that he came out wearing the grave clothes because he was going back to the grave but the future resurrection will involve the earth eternally transformation of the bodies of Christ's people the example we have is the resurrected body of Jesus as Paul writes to the church at Corinth but each in his own order Christ the first fruits then it is coming those who belong to Christ you see Christ left the grave clothes behind we often speak of the empty tomb but in actual fact it wasn't empty it was empty of the body of

Christ but there was something left behind in the tomb it was empty of the body of Christ but the grave clothes were left behind in the tomb as noted by Peter and the other disciple that came to the tomb stooping to look in he saw the linen cloth lying there but he did not go in then Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb he saw the linen cloth lying there and the face cloth which had been on Jesus head not lying with the linen cloth but folded up in a place by itself you see Lazarus came out with his grave clothes because he was going to use them again but Jesus left them behind he left them behind he left them in the tomb in the future resurrection our same bodies that lived and died will be raised the body is not simply replaced with a new body but is changed into a glorified body a body that will be suited for the new heavens and the new earth in which

[33 : 48] Christ will reign forever in glory thus we see that while we tend to look forward to the entry of our souls into heaven at the point of our death the Bible emphasizes the resurrection as a greater blessing awaiting both the living and the dead with the return of Christ the resurrected body is described later on in this chapter it says so it is with the resurrection of the dead while what is sown is perishable what is raised is imperishable it is sown in dishonor it is raised in glory it is sown in weakness it is raised in power it is sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body if there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body and the resurrection of

Christ is the proof that his work on the cross was sufficient to deal with our sins if what he did on the cross was insufficient for dealing with our sins he would not have been raised on the third day the resurrection is a declaration of the fact that if we put our trust in Jesus that we are justified and accepted in the Lord Jesus Christ how do we know that there will be a resurrection of all the dead on the last day believers going to glory and the unbeliever into eternal eternal death well when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about the return of the Lord and the resurrection he says for this we declare to you by a word from the Lord the Bible message is clear in the words of Jesus himself and this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day the vital question for me and you tonight is not merely how can I know that there will be a future resurrection but how can I know that in that resurrection I will be raised to the glory of eternal life and can look forward as the psalmist did in the psalm that we'll soon sing when he said as for me I shall behold your face in righteousness when I awake I shall be satisfied with your likeness our body made like into the glorified body of Christ for we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is rather than be raised to the condemnation of eternal punishment that we all desire for our sins and the answer to that vital question is found in our relationship to God through the Lord Jesus Christ Christ the writer to the Hebrews says Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many will appear a second time not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him Jesus himself comforted the troubled heart of the disciples in the upper room with these words if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also we read in the book of Acts that in his ascension that while the disciples were gazing into heaven as he went behold two men stood by them in white robes and said men of Galilee why do you stand looking into heaven this Jesus he was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him going to heaven you see having established the Lord's return the Bible highlights for us certain events that will take place on this return and it is to these events that we are now focusing our attention there will be the general resurrection some to eternal life some eternal damnation there will be the judgment going to heaven when we die you see it's not our final blessing although it is a blessing Paul could say for me to live is Christ and to die is gain Paul could say my desire is to depart and be with Christ for that is far better the soul is with Christ but that's not the final state Paul always spoke of another day more than the day of his death he often spoke of the day of his resurrection!

[39 : 18] the catechism asks the question what benefits do believers receive from Christ at death and it answers the soul of believers at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory and their bodies being still united to Christ do rest in their graves until the resurrection again the catechism asks the question what benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection and it answers at the resurrection believers being raised up to glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity in body and in soul after believers have gone to heaven the day will come when Christ returns to earth and his people will be raised in the glory of the final resurrection and according to

Paul this is the hope that sustains God's people in the trials of life Paul writing to the church at Rome says for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us as we wait with hope for the redemption of our bodies and to obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God in the Old Testament we find the familiar words of Job that I'm sure you've often heard for 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 is that your own hope tonight knowing that your Redeemer lives knowing that he is going to return and although your skin will be destroyed yet in your body you shall see God through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ whom you shall see for yourself and your own eyes shall behold no wonder then Paul writes I consider that the

sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us as we wait with hope for the redemption of our bodies and to obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of

God for I deliver to you as of first importance what I also received that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures that he was buried that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures and that embodies our hope it embodies our gospel he died for our sins and he was raised again that is our hope that is our hope that is the gospel that we have believed and we have believed it not in vain may the Lord bless our thoughts upon his word let us pray eternal and ever blessed Lord we give thanks for all the blessings that you have given to thy people through thine atoning work on the cross of

Golgotha all the blessings that you have sealed for thy people to save them from what their sins deserved and to grant to them the hope of glory the hope of being with you in the inheritance that you have prepared for your people and to be there in body and soul as we await your return and as we await the day of the general resurrection oh lord we give thee thanks that that is our hope that encourages us as we journey through this world despite the hostility that the world shows to us that we have this living hope that the day is coming when thy people will be acquitted and when they shall enter into the full enjoying of God in body and soul we pray lord that thou watch over us in coming days and forgive us for our sins in jesus name amen we shall conclude by singing in psalm 17 and at verse 13 arise and disappoint my foe and cast him down o lord my soul save from the wicked man the man which is thy sword for men watch are thine hand o lord from worldly men may save which only in their present life their part and portion have who spell with their treasure hid thou fillest thy children have in plenty of their goods the rest they to their children leave but as for me i thine i thine own face in righteousness will see and with my likeness when i wake i satisfied shall be we shall sing these verses to the lord's praise psalm 17 on page 218 verse 13 to the end of the psalm arise and disappoint my foe and cast him down o lord my soul say from the way get man the man which is thy sword for men which are thine hand o lord from worldly men be saved which only in the present life that part one portion have whose belly with thy treasure hid thou fellst the children have been plenty of their goods the rest they too their children live!

[47 : 30] but as for me! thy own face in righteousness will see and with thy likeness when I wake I satisfied shall be the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen