

THE RESURRECTION

Sam Bloore

READ JOHN 20:1-10, 18-21

Since Easter we have been doing this series on Resurrection Life. This sermon focuses on the phenomenon of the resurrection itself - it's an attempt to explain why it's such a big deal!

Perhaps a few people might explain to us the resurrection in their own words.

Pope Benedict (Joseph Ratzinger) in his trilogy on Jesus, introduces the Resurrection by quoting Paul in 1 Corinthians 15: *"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ."* (1 Cor 15:14-15).

He doesn't include this, but a couple of verses later Paul writes: *"...If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied."*

- *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* (KJV)
- *"If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we're a pretty sorry lot."* (The Message)

WHY DO YOU THINK WE ARE TO BE PITTIED IF IT'S NOT TRUE?

Pope Benedict goes on: *"With these words Saint Paul explains quite drastically what faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ means for the Christian message overall: it is its very foundation. The Christian faith stands or falls with the truth of the testimony that Christ is risen from the dead."*

WHAT HAVE WE GOT LEFT OF CHRISTIAN FAITH IF THE RESURRECTION NEVER HAPPENED?

Benedict again: *"If this were taken away, it would still be possible to piece together from the Christian tradition a series of interesting ideas about God and men, about man's being and his obligations, a kind of religious world view: but the Christian faith itself would be dead. Jesus would be a failed religious leader, who despite his failure remains great and can cause us to reflect. But he would then remain purely human, and his authority would extend only so far as his message is of interest to us."*

Whether Jesus merely WAS or whether he also IS—this depends on the Resurrection."

WHY DOES IT MATTER THAT JESUS 'IS'?

The Resurrection has been painted many times by many famous (and not so famous artists... **Get people to look up some of them on their phones – what have some of the different artists captured?**)

While you are sparing a thought for artists who have tried to capture it...spare a thought for the disciples who were trying to get their head around it!

Again Benedict writes: *“For the disciples, this was something utterly unexpected, to which they were only slowly able to adjust. Jewish faith did indeed know of a resurrection of the dead at the end of time. New life was linked to the inbreaking of a new world and thus made complete sense. If there is a new world, then there is also a new mode of life there. But a resurrection into definitive otherness in the midst of the continuing old world was not foreseen and therefore at first made no sense.*

The paradox was indescribable. He was quite different, no mere resuscitated corpse, but one living anew and forever in the power of God. And yet at the same time, while no longer belonging to our world, he was truly present there, he himself. It was an utterly unique experience, which burst open the normal boundaries of experience and yet for the disciples was quite beyond doubt. This explains the unique character of the Resurrection accounts: they speak of something paradoxical, of something that surpasses all experience and yet is utterly real and present.”

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE RESURRECTION DOES FOR **WHAT WE KNOW AND HOW WE KNOW IT?**

If the resurrection happened, it changes the rules of the game.

If it happened, it is utterly paradigm-shifting.

N. T. Wright: *“The resurrection of Jesus offers itself not as a very odd event within the world as it is, but as the utterly characteristic, prototypical, and foundational event within the world as it has begun to be. It is not an absurd event within the old world, but the symbol and starting point of the new world.”*

When everything in us is saying “But dead men don’t rise,” these commentators are reminding us, “you’re right, dead men don’t rise, but dead men will rise, and Jesus has gone first.”

And not just dead people. The Resurrection is our guarantee that ALL of the effects of sin and the Fall – every injustice, every brokenness across all of creation – will one day be fully redeemed and restored...

WHY IS THAT GOOD NEWS?!