

The Resurrection of the Dead

by J. Glyn Owen

The resurrection of the dead is the core of the gospel message, and rejecting it has serious consequences for our preaching and faith.

Duration: 50:52

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 1 Corinthians 15:12-13, 1 Corinthians 15:35, 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 1 Corinthians 15:58

Topics: "Resurrection Of The Dead"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the significance of death and its connection to sin. He explains that death is not a random occurrence, but rather a just punishment for sin, as stated in the scriptures. The preacher highlights the importance of preaching the crucified and risen Christ, as only through Him can people be saved from the death of sin. He concludes by expressing gratitude for God's revelation and urging believers to proclaim and live out the message of Christ among those who are under the sentence of death.

Transcript

Will you kindly turn in the Word of Scripture to the passage that was read for us by Mr. Lowe, and we are going to take as our text this evening the first verse in that section, namely verse 12, though we shall be looking at it in the context immediately preceding and following. 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? The Apostle Paul is there referring to a philosophy that was current in the Corinth of his day, which clearly disbelieved in the supernatural generally, and in the resurrection very particularly. And somehow or other this pernicious philosophy had found its way, dare we say, into the church of Corinth.

At least there were those among the Christian community who were apparently giving some acceptance to it at this particular stage. How far they had gone, we cannot say. Paul has reminded them, you remember at the beginning of the chapter as we heard this evening, he has reminded them that it was part and parcel of the gospel that he preached, that Jesus died according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the Scriptures.

He implies there, of course, that it was foretold that the Messiah would die. Jesus fulfilled that prophecy. It was foretold that he would rise again from the dead.

Jesus fulfilled that prophecy. And this, says the Apostle Paul, is the gospel that he himself first received, and having received it, proclaimed it in Corinth. This, therefore, he says, is the gospel by which he was saved.

It is the gospel of a Messiah sent by God, of whom the Scriptures spoke before he came, and who in his life, death, and resurrection fulfilled what was said concerning him. Now, that was the church at Corinth, so it means that every individual of that church had professed faith in the Christ who died, and was buried, and rose again. But the hearing of this theory, this philosophy, seemed to have tickled the fancy of some of the community.

The Apostle Paul doesn't really, at this stage, he doesn't treat them as enemies, he doesn't call for excommunication, and that means that probably these people are just playing with the truth. They have not altogether embraced it, but they're about, maybe, to embrace it. He warns them most clearly, and in the process of doing that, he gives us this very remarkable chapter, which we have in our New Testament, concerning the resurrection of the dead.

Now, there are a number of things that emerge here, and tonight I just want to begin something that will continue next time. We begin by looking at the offending proposition that was announced by this offensive philosophy, this speculative philosophy, and it appears, from what a number of New Testament scholars tell us, that the phrase, the sentence, there is no resurrection of the dead, represents a cliché, which they kind of banded around. There is no resurrection of the dead.

And it became a kind of theme song at a certain point in their teaching, whoever they were. To get the real feel of the intellectual position they're represented, I think it may be necessary for us to translate the Greek a little bit more literally, and then I think you will see the point, or at least one of the main points, that emerge here. Let me do that.

Taking it a little more literally, the Greek could well be translated something like this, but if Christ is announced that he raised out from among dead bodies, or corpses, how do some of you say, asks Paul, how do some of you say there is no resurrection of dead bodies, or corpses, and it does not happen? Now, the reference to dead bodies, or corpses, immediately pinpoints the real issue. Paul is not talking about resurrection generally, that could have reference to a spiritual resurrection. The pointed issue here is not the spiritual resurrection, but the physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We'll come back to that, we'll come back to that in a moment. But let us note from this twelfth verse, the sheer contradiction between the clear testimony of many witnesses on the one hand, and this philosophical cliché on the other. You remember that last time we were looking at the evidence of the witnesses as brought forward here by Paul.

Interestingly enough, I didn't say so last time, but I'm sure you have all noticed it, that Paul did not amass all the witness, all the evidence that he could have done. He doesn't refer to certain people in the New Testament whom we know saw the Lord risen from the dead. But he brings forward sufficient evidence, particularly according to Greek and Roman law, more than adequate evidence, in order to prove a point.

He could have called upon more people, as it were, to bear testimony, or have indicated that they were available, but he doesn't do that. The fact was so self-evident to the Apostle Paul, and to the early Christians, that Jesus was risen from the dead. Now, says the Apostle, this philosophical tenet, this cliché that is being bandied around, it's quite contradictory to the facts as we know them.

I find that very often I have to tell myself, in reading some theological books, I have to keep on telling myself that the only Jesus we know anything about is the Jesus to whom the Apostles bear witness. We don't know anything about any other Jesus. The only Jesus we know anything about is the Jesus who died on a cross, and was buried in a tomb, and rose again.

And all the evidence that we have concerning Jesus of Nazareth says the same thing about it. It isn't that there are a number of other sources, a number of other books that talk about a Jesus other than this. Far from it.

All the witnesses in the New Testament affirm of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the promised Messiah, that he died according to the Scriptures, rose again. Now, says the Apostle Paul, this theory of yours contradicts the facts witnessed. I've brought forward, or rather, I've referred to a whole series of people who were witnesses of his resurrection.

He says it just doesn't tie up. If it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no such a thing as the resurrection of the dead? But let me return to the other point that we wanted to make. It needs to be seen that the real issue related to the physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you go to your libraries today and pick up a book on the resurrection, written by some theologian or other, you may very well find that the resurrection they refer to is simply a spiritual phenomenon. That is, by resurrection many believe that what is implied is that Jesus was a great person. And then he came to a sudden and a terrible end, and he was buried.

But the memory of Jesus seemed to come to life again. And the influence of Jesus, even though he had been buried, lived on. And the spirit of Jesus, even though he is gone, it is still here.

Well now, all that is true, of course, but that's not what Paul is talking about here. The resurrection at issue here is something infinitely more than that. It's the physical resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the man who was crucified on the center cross, who was buried in Joseph's borrowed tomb.

He rose again from the dead. That's where the battle is waged. That's where the battle is waged.

And of course, in the Greek context, in the context of Greek culture and Greek philosophy, there were very few who really denied the principle of resurrection, that is, resurrection of the spirit. Indeed, Greek philosophy, generally it would appear, looked forward to the fact that one day they would move out of the body because the spirit is immortal and the spirit will live. And they spoke of the body as that which cramps and imprisons the soul, and they look forward to death because they believe then the soul will come to its own.

That was a pagan philosophy, but they believed that. And so to talk about the resurrection of the body to them, it was to talk, I'm sorry, about the resurrection of the spirit, would be talking about something they all believed in, but not so the resurrection of the body. And this is really what fired them, and this is what fired their opposition, and this, this is the pernicious teaching they're trying to introduce to the propagators of the gospel, to the heralds of the gospel that brought into existence, by the grace of God, a church on that ancient dunghill, Corinth.

They held up this doctrine of the physical resurrection to great scorn and contempt. An illustration of this may be given by quoting from Celsus at the end of the second century. This is what he said about it, and it

indicates, I believe, the kind of way in which they scoffed and scorned at the very idea of physical resurrection.

Celsus wrote, really, he says, it is a hope of worms, for what soul of man would wish any longer for a body that had rotted? And that's the way they talked to Christians. Now, that spirit of unqualified skepticism then was threatening to invade the church of Jesus Christ, and so Paul warns them, great pastor that he was, he warns them of the peril of it, and he doesn't shrink from giving an exposure of it, and that's what he's doing here. He had warned the Colossians, you remember, of the danger of the philosophy of this world.

See to it, he writes to the Colossians chapter 2 and verse 8, see to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ. In that same spirit pervaded Corinth also, it would seem, that is outside the church anyway, and was threatening to invade the church, and I think it is reflected in Paul's earlier reference in chapter 1 and verse 20, where he says, he refers to the wisdom of this world. Now actually, of course, and I think we need to stress this, there's need to stress the fact that there is no necessary argument between philosophy per se, and the Christian faith or the Christian church.

Not everyone will appreciate that, perhaps, but I think that that is so. What is philosophy? What is a philosopher? Well, etymologically, at least, a philosopher is a lover of wisdom, and historically speaking, the philosopher has been a person who looks at common beliefs and examines them under the scrutiny of his intellect, and tries to see whether they're reasonable, whether they're reasonably best. He is a person who will work out the thesis that is accepted, and attempt to say whether this is reasonable.

If it is not reasonable, well then, of course, he himself will not accept it, and he will advise everybody else not to accept it. Now there is nothing per se, there is nothing in philosophy per se, that need be at loggerheads with the Christian church, and with the Christian faith. The whole of the Bible is addressed to the mind, to the intellect.

The call of the Bible in the Old Testament and the New Testament is, come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. He gives us his word, and he asks us to look at it, and to ponder over it, and to live according to it, and that means we must think about it. So there is no necessary battle between philosophy per se, and the Christian faith.

Where the trouble begins is where philosophy cuts away from the creator of the universe, and the redeemer whom the creator has sent, and says, I in and of myself, my reason, my powers are sufficient to judge truth from error, right from wrong. We don't need a god or god, we can stand on our own two feet, and like the humanism, the humanist philosophers, they say, there is nothing other than man, there is no one, man is alone, there is no god, there is no supernatural. Now it is at that point that we have to cross swords, when philosophy steps over the line, deems itself to be self-sufficient, severs its connection, as we've said, with the creator and with the redeemer, and becomes so arrogant and self-sufficient.

This is so, of course, because philosophy per se does not accept the doctrine of original sin. Philosophy per se believes that man is a very good being, perfectible, generally, or at least that man certainly has not experienced the kind of thing which the Bible speaks of, and theology speaks of as the fall. Man is not a fallen being, and therefore he can reason things out himself without the aid of anyone.

Now, of course, the Bible takes another view. The Bible tells us that God made man on his own image, and therefore man is the highest of all the creatures. Nevertheless, man, as God made him, has fallen,

and something infinite, something radical has happened to man, to the whole of mankind, in consequence of which even our minds are darkened, and we have a leaning towards evil, and we love darkness rather than light.

Sin has completely ruined the inner man, not in the sense that there is nothing that we can do that is acceptable or has any goodness in it as judged by our fellows, but what it does mean is this, that there is nothing that we can do that does not bear the taint of sin as seen by God. And so, philosophy refusing to accept this revelation of the human character and of the human nature, and of human nature, it takes views that are unacceptable to the Word of God. Someone has said that in his fallen condition, man is as incapable of the knowledge of God as a slug or a snail is unqualified to appreciate a Rembrandt.

Well, now, that may be an exaggeration, I wonder. Hence the reason why man did not discover God by dint of philosophical argumentation and reasoning. You remember that the Apostle Paul makes much of this in verse 21, for example, of the first chapter of this letter to the Corinthians.

Since in the wisdom of God, he says, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God. God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to serve those who believe. Do notice that in the wisdom of God, God so arranged it that through its own wisdom, the world did not find him out.

I believe, as others believe, that in the providence of God, it was necessary that Greek philosophy should have reached its apex, its glory, at the heights of its glory, before the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the reason is this. Philosophy came to the full bloom, as it were, there in ancient Greece, but it did not discover God.

Greece, like Rome, was without the knowledge of the true God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. There was no knowledge of God in Corinth when Paul went there. There was no knowledge of the true God in Athens when Paul went there, or in other Greek cities.

With all their wisdom, all their philosophy, and even in the cradle of science and of politics, they did not know God. God, in his own wisdom and in his own providence, allowed philosophy to bloom and to blossom and come to full bloom. And then, in his own inscrutable wisdom, he caused a virgin to conceive by the interposition of the Holy Spirit, and a babe was born.

And in and through the babe who was born in a manger and died on a cross and was buried in a tomb and rose again, God chose to make himself known to men. And so he baffles the wisdom of this world. Now, the philosophical tenet propounded extensively in the Corinthian world then, and capturing the minds of some Christians was subject to great limitations and ignorance.

Now, the next thing I want you to notice is this. To believe this kind of thing, says the Apostle Paul, to believe this kind of thing, to believe what these philosophers teach, has very serious consequences. And he begins to deal with these in verse 12, and there's a whole series of them there.

We shall look at the series, but I just want to deal with the first of these tonight. 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? I'm sorry, it's in verse 13. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless, and so is your faith. Now, I want us to look on to that 14th verse tonight and see the first of the consequences, what the consequences would be if this philosophy were true. Let's look at it again.

Look at the general principle underlying Paul's criticism here. The main point, says Paul, is this. If there is no such a thing as the resurrection of the dead, you have this in verse 13 and then 16.

If there is no such a thing as the resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And then verse 16, if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. Now, what's he saying? Well, you see, he's answering the philosophers in this way.

He's saying, now look, he says, if this is a valid principle that you have embodied in your cliché, there is no such thing as the resurrection of the dead. If that principle is true and valid, then of course, he says, it follows. There could not have been anyone at any time raised from the dead.

And he relates that specifically to Christ, whose gospel was preached in Corinth. If in principle there can be and there has not been a resurrection of the dead, Jesus was not raised. But you see, Paul puts this in a setting where he has referred to those who are still alive, who were able to bear witness to the fact that Jesus was alive from the dead.

Now, what are these consequences? Well, I want us to look at the first. Paul says that if this were so, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching, to quote the MIV, is useless.

And then he adds another, to which I'm not going to refer tonight, and so is your faith. We'll come back there. Our preaching is useless.

Literally what he said is this, our preaching is empty. Our preaching is an empty thing. It's a bottle.

It's a spent cartridge. It has no power. The announcement of a dead Savior has no power to save.

Now, you and I know that. There are people who preach religion, but they've never, in the course of their preaching or their teaching, seen men and women raised from the death of sin to the life which is in God. And one reason is this, that the Christ whom they preach is not the crucified and risen Christ of the Scriptures.

If Christ is not raised, he says, our preaching is empty. There's nothing to it but words. And brothers and sisters, haven't we, haven't we to confess that there is much preaching that is nothing else but words? You notice how the Apostle Paul expected something more than that always.

I have no time to go after it now. I was tempted to do so, but it'll just take us away from the main argument tonight, and I will abstain. But Paul does that in many, many places.

He refers it in the letter to the Thessalonians, for example. He did not simply preach in word only, but in power and in demonstration of the Spirit of God. In other words, the Spirit of God gave power to the message, sealed it, made it effective, made it real, made it powerful.

Not in word only did Paul preach. In order to appreciate the real implications of Paul's affirmation, of course, it is necessary for us to understand what is meant by death. Now, this may sound irrelevant to you at first, but I trust you will see that it is exceedingly relevant.

There is no gospel that can deal with the exigencies of death as biblically understood, other than the gospel of a crucified and risen Christ, as biblically proclaimed. Scripture everywhere shares in Paul's view that death is something terrible, terrifying. For one reason or another, we so often fail to appreciate this,

and we lose so much in terms of understanding of the Scriptures when we do not recognize the terror of death as biblically conceived.

Death is more than the way off stage, as someone has put it. It is more than the mere exit from the scene of life for the snuffing out of the candle of conscious existence. Of course, it is all that, in a sense, in a sense only, of course.

But death is infinitely more than all that. Were it only that, it would be as natural for humans as for animals of all kinds. But that's not so.

In human experience, death has a dimension that is altogether confined to humans. The animal world knows nothing at all about it, according to our Christian understanding. It is altogether unique according to the Christian understanding and to Christian experience generally.

You see, death has a sting in its bosom for us humans, and it's a very real sting. However much we try to evade it or to avoid it, neither is it simply confined to our greater sensitivity than the animal kingdom to the matter of separating from our families. A dog when it dies may or may not feel the separation with other dogs.

A bird when it dies may or may not sense the separation from other birds. Humans have an acute sense of the terror of separation. That is true.

But there is infinitely more than that to the terror of death. All that pales into insignificance alongside the feeling that death, like a glorified officer of the law, ushers us into a sphere that holds ingredients of horror for the guilty and impenitent transgressors of God's law. Death may well be a biological necessity, but it is more, it is infinitely more than that.

What then is it? Well, divine revelation sees it as a composite of certain distinctive features, which it has assumed specifically because of sin. Even if God meant man to exist on this planet for only a specified number of years, and the end or the termination of that life could be designated death, that kind of death, the mere exit from this life into another, is something altogether different from death as biblically understood as the experience of the race. And it is sin that has given to death the form and the features of its present guise and its present character.

Death as we know it and experience it is the consequence of sin, so that a Savior who presumed to save us from sin must save us from death. Death in all its phases, death as a composite entity, death in its totality, sooner or later he must be able to do that. Otherwise we are not saved from sin in its totality.

Now there are at least three major characteristics of death that I think are relevant here, and we must look at them very briefly in order to see the point that Paul is making. If Christ has not risen, then our preaching, what we preach, is empty. We have no real Savior.

We may talk well, we may be able to spin the arms, and we may be able to talk and capture the imaginations of people, but we can't save the last. There are at least three major characteristics of death according to the scriptures. One, death is the result of a just sentence by the just judge of all mankind.

When God made man, he said, you are free to eat any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die. Now I've not time to deal with this. I would love to take the time, but I must not.

Paul assures us that death is the carrying out of that threat. Death, he insists, is the very wage paid for sin. It's not an accident.

It's not something that has just happened. It's not just the fading away of life. Death is the wage paid by sin or for sin.

And he adds, sin entered the world through one man, and death came through sin. And in this way, death came to all men because all sinned. Now the disregarding of the creator's warning and the violation of his commandment resulted in God's just execution of his threatened consequences.

This is one element in death. Brothers and sisters, we die because we're under the judgment of God. And that's not the whole truth as far as Christians are concerned.

There is forgiveness and there is justification and there is acceptance. But death is part and parcel of the fact that we have fallen and have sinned and are under judgment. One day we shall be saved even from the ravages of death.

That's involved in our Christian gospel. But that's what death is. In the first place, the just judge of all the universe is executing his law.

And who are you and who am I to argue with him? The Holy One, our Creator. In the second place, death is also descriptive of a state of condition of being, a state or condition of being within our own souls, within the sinner's own heart. Now this is something quite different.

Paul refers to this when he writes to the Romans in Romans 8, 6. He says, the mind of sinful man is death. Did you get that? The mind of sinful man is death. And then he adds a little later, because the sinful mind, he says, is hostile to God.

It does not submit to God's law, nor indeed can it. This is one reason why the philosophers, you see, without the aid of divine revelation and the Spirit of God always go astray. The state of spiritual death expresses itself in an antipathy to God.

Instinctively, when things go wrong, who's the first person we blame? Well, if he's not the first, God is usually the second. The state of spiritual death expresses itself in an antipathy to God, and thus to all his representatives. Whether it be his word, we quarrel with his word, his spirit, we grieve his spirit, his servants, his church, whatever.

All the true representatives of God we quarrel with. We do not like the authority that comes through God and his agencies, and we will not bend to the law of God. We want our own way.

We're hostile, says the apostle Paul, and all of us know something of this. The third element in death, of course, goes beyond all that, and I haven't said the half about the first two, neither can I about the third. Death is not only a sentence carried out and a state of soul that exists, it is still something more.

What more? Well, I can only give you the language of the New Testament without attempting to expound it, but death is something infinitely more. I read in Revelation of the second death, Revelation 2.11, it starts there, you have it elsewhere. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

Now, you notice what John is saying there. The people addressed there were in very difficult circumstances, living in the midst of enemies and foes of all kinds, but John urges them to overcome at

any cost. Why does he argue that it is worth paying the price to overcome? Well, he says it's worth paying the price to overcome, were it only for this.

There's more than this, but were it only for this. The second death will not touch them. A second death is something that defies, defies description.

Elsewhere in scripture this seems to be described as a banishment from the presence of God, as for example in 2 Thessalonians 1, where Paul says they will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes, to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. To go back to Jesus himself, he refers to a future experience of those whom he classifies as goats in his parable, the parable of the sheep and the goats, you remember, Matthew 25. In this way, then King will say to those on his left hand, depart from me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

John speaks of a lake of fire and Jesus again of outer darkness. Now I simply cannot take all these things in, but if you and I are honest with scriptures and we bring one alongside of the other, you can dimly see something which constitutes this other aspect of death in its totality. The imagery varies, but death includes all these three features.

Death is not complete when you are buried or cremated. Death is not done with when you lie motionless in a casket. There is an aspect of death which takes us beyond the here and now.

Now the practical import of all this as far as our text is concerned is this. Paul would have us realize that the only gospel that can save men and women from death in all its totality requires a savior who is lord of death in all its features. And one of those features is the body buried decomposed.

And unless Christ is master over that and somehow or other can call the atoms together again and raise the dead and give us a new body as he promised, he's really no savior from death. And if he's no savior from death, he can be no savior in life. If he were not able to do this, then we would not have a savior at our most vulnerable point and where we need him most.

In anticipating death in the future and in walking through the valley of the shadow into the reality at last. But of course it is the great insistence of this chapter that we have such a savior. Norse is this philosophy.

There is no resurrection of the dead. Asked as the apostle Paul, there are witnesses here and many of them are still alive. They've seen him.

They've touched him. They've handled him. The very existence of a church in Corinth.

Where did you come from men and women? He says, in effect, how are you here? What's made you the men and women you are? Was it a dead savior left in the grave to rot? The very testimony of a saint, if it's a true Christian experience that he testifies to, means that it could not have been effected by anyone less than a son of God incarnate who bore our sins away and rose again to perform his own saving work in the hearts and lives of men. Now, my friends, I conclude. But I want to conclude with this note.

Jesus knew full well that it was necessary for his disciples to understand this and that it was necessary for his disciples, for all his followers, for his church, that he should rise again from the dead. And from Caesarea Philippi onwards, he not only insisted on telling his disciples that he was going to die, but also that he was going to rise again from the dead. Take the, for example, three statements by which Mark

records, which Mark records in three successive chapters.

He tells us in chapter 8, 9, and chapter 10, almost identically the same things. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. You have the same kind of thing in chapter, Mark 9, 31, and then Mark 10, 33, and 34.

He recognized the need that he should rise again, and then he pledged himself to fulfill that need by rising again. If he did not rise again, we have no gospel at all. I hope you can see that.

Jesus is not authoritative as a teacher unless he rose again. He said he was going to. He said he was able to, and it was part and parcel of his program as he enunciated it to his disciples.

If Jesus is not risen, then I can't trust him as a teacher, nor even a good man. For he makes mistakes, and if he can make a mistake about an important feature such as this, we can't trust him. But more than that, we cannot trust him as Savior.

For he cannot save us out of the totality of the consequences of the curse that sin has brought into our lives. But because he's risen, because he's risen, he is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him. The Ephesians to the Hebrews tells us, because he ever lives, he is able to save those that come to God by him.

He is able to pardon our sins and take them away, and take us away from our sins. He's able to come between us and our darling idols. He's able to change our hearts.

He's able to transform our spirits, and by the working of his own Holy Spirit within us, he's able to give us hope that we can look into the teeth of physical death itself, and know that we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. Yea, you and I may be buried, but we shall rise again, for he is but the firstfruits of them that slept. He's the first of the harvest, says Paul.

I'm sorry I'm going ahead of myself, but it's very important. He's the first chief of the harvest, and the first chief means there's a whole harvest to gather in, and the church is the harvest. He's the first fruit brought in.

We, by the grace of the God who sent him, will one day by his angels be gathered from the north and the south and the east and the west, and the graves will give up their dead, and the saints will enter their full inheritance, and that includes the salvation of the body from the ravages of hallelujah. Are you trusting him? Are you praising him? Worshiping him? Serving him? Telling others about him? Oh, what a difference it would make to our fellow citizens in this great city, if every man and woman who has a vote were to know Jesus risen from among the dead. And how can they know, unless you and I tell them? Let us pray.

Blessed Lord, we bow before the amazing wonder of your love. We cannot attempt, we cannot profess to be able to take it all in. Times there are when it simply overwhelms us, like the tide coming in and overtaking us, and we are swamped by it.

But, oh God, we thank you for these truths. We thank you for revealing yourself to us, your creatures, to the fathers, to the prophets, and the law. And in the last of the days of your activity in revealing yourself, you revealed yourself to us in your son, coequal with yourself, who when he had made possible the

purification of sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Oh Lord God Almighty, we thank you for the Savior, and we pray that you will bind us ever closer to him. Make us servants of yours in proclaiming him, and in living Christ among men under the sentence of death. We ask it in his holy name.

Amen.

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