

Living in Light of the Resurrection

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Preacher: Bryan Hart

[0 : 0 0] My name is Brian Hart. I'm one of the pastors here. We're delighted to have you. And we're going to transition now into the sermon, which is the third and final in a really short series we've been doing on the resurrection. So week one of the series was Easter Sunday, where we considered the single historical event of resurrection in human history where a human being was raised from the dead into a new glorified body. And that's the resurrection of Jesus, which it's happened. It's in the past. It's part of human history. Last Sunday, we looked at the resurrection in the future and the harvest that's waiting, the bodily resurrection where what happened to Jesus is also going to happen to us. Today, we're going to consider the present moment.

What does it mean to live in light of the resurrection? Now, when we were together last Sunday, we looked at 1 Corinthians 15, which is a really long, dense theological argument for the resurrection. Paul's writing to this church in Corinth and it's extraordinary what he says. He talks about how Christ has been raised as the first fruits of a greater harvest that's coming.

And that harvest comes at when he returns. And when he returns, he is going to, well, we are going to be resurrected, but he's going to be victorious over everything. All powers and authorities will be subjected to him. He will even be victorious over death. And he's going to put each one of us back into a real body, but not just a body. It's going to be a body that can't die. And it's not just a body that can't die. It's going to be gloriously transformed. We use that image of metamorphosis.

You know, like the, the, the, the caterpillar to the butterfly, like you're going to be a human being still, but you're going to be a new kind of human being with a new kind of glory. And, and all of this is going to be so that God can be all in all, which is Paul's way of describing what we're waiting for when heaven is going to come to earth. And there's going to be this marriage, this, this union. You know, we talked about that a little bit last week. The union is what we're all looking for in the world. It's like when, when a man and a woman get married, there's union. When, when the land and the sea come together, you have the coast. That's where everybody wants to go on vacation. You get this union of these two things that are just make, makes it just more wonderful than if they were apart. The dawn and the dusk is the time of day where you get the union between the night and the day. And that's what Paul says we're all waiting. That's what this whole thing is for, is for when God returns and the entire world is renewed and plunged into the never ending spirit of God. It's what the world is waiting for. But the question we want to wrestle with today is, what does all that have to do with how you live right now? And does believing in this, does believing in the resurrection have any practical effect on how you live your life?

And I think the answer overwhelmingly is, is yes, it does. And so that's what we want to, we want to look at. We're going to pick up the, we're just going to read the last few verses from chapter 15. That's where we'll, we'll start. So again, this is first, first Corinthians 15.

[3 : 10] Paul's got this great line. Oh, death, where's your victory? Oh, death, where's your sting? And then he says, the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. And then he says, based on all of that, therefore, based on everything he's just said, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain. Many people have pointed out to what a remarkable way Paul has chosen to end this, this, this chapter, this portion of his letter. And the reason it's remarkable is that it's just not what you would expect. You would think after he's talking on and on and on about this great future that awaits, you'd think he'd say something like, so relax, relax. Based on the resurrection, we know that this world's, this world right now is it's, it's a broken place and you're certainly not going to fix it. Uh, we, we should just chill out and just wait until Jesus returns. God's got a great future for you. Don't worry about the mess that's here right now. And that's, that's the opposite of what he says. He says, um, based on the resurrection, you should be steadfast and immovable. He doesn't say, um, chill out. He says, always abound in the work of the Lord that there's work to do. And then he says, your labor is not in vain. What you do really matters. And somehow in Paul's mind, the reason it matters, the reason that your work that you do, the practical things you do with your life, the reason it matters is because of the resurrection. I mean, have you ever thought that way? Do you, do you think that the resurrection actually makes your life more meaningful and the things that you do more meaningful? Why would Paul say that? What does he mean? Well, this is where it is helpful when we study things like letters or books of the Bible, it's better to read them as wholes and not segment them, which is what we have to do most of the time on Sunday mornings. So first Corinthians 15 comes on the heels of first

Corinthians one through 14. And throughout the whole letter to the Corinthian church, something that we see, an argument that Paul's making is that we are called to live within the ethics of the resurrection. Now, uh, ethics, that's, that's a word to describe how we think about human behavior and our moral principles. Uh, what, you know, what kind of decisions, practical choices do you make in your life and why do you make them? What do you, what do you think are good decisions and bad decisions?

What's virtuous? What's not something that's very clear in first Corinthians is that there are ethical implications to what we believe about what has happened to Jesus and about what we think is going to happen to each one of us. In other words, resurrection is not about escapism, right? You've probably heard the cliché, you know, so-and-so they're so, they're so heavenly minded. They're of no earthly good. What's ironic is that according to Paul, the more resurrection minded you are, the more earthly good you should be. Why is that? Well, first Corinthians 15 depends on something.

His argument there actually picks up and really depends on something that he argued earlier in the letter. I think that first Corinthians is one of the more, uh, practical parts in the new Testament. In fact, it's a letter that is, I would, the entire thing isn't about ethics, but most of it is about ethics. How should you practically live? In fact, Paul doesn't really do proper theology until he gets to first Corinthians 15 when he's talking about the resurrection, everything else up to that point. Most of it's been about practical issues in the Corinthian church and their behavior. And one of the, one of the things that he deals with is the sexual behavior of people in the Corinthian church.

He's dealing with sexual ethics. And, um, in chapter six, he, he gives an argument for sexual ethics that is based on the resurrection, which is kind of amazing. Um, because I want to say this at the outset, the Bible has a lot to say about sexual ethics. The resurrection isn't the only thing we need to be thinking about when we think about sexual ethics, but it's interesting that we would think about resurrection at all. And so I want you to see the principle that Paul uses in first Corinthians six, because then we're going to take that principle and we're going to say, okay, well, what happens if we take that principle and we apply it to other aspects of our life? So look, look, look what he says in first Corinthians six. He starts off with these, um, cliches or sayings that seem to be coming out of the Corinthian church. All things are lawful for me. It's something that it seems like the Corinthians were saying, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food. And God's will destroy both one and the other. So it seems like here, Paul's reckoning with two things. The

[8:10] Corinthians are believing that are not good. The first is they have just a weird, weird, unhelpful view of liberty and Christian freedom. It seems like they're saying like, Hey, Paul, we're free in Christ, man. We can do whatever we want. We're free. The second quote about the food being meant for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God's going to destroy both. This seems to be reflecting a belief that became pop much more popular later, um, in the decades and centuries following. And it's since been called something called Gnosticism and Gnostic belief is, uh, among other things, believes that material things are really not that important. It's the spiritual things that are really important. And so you can see where this leads to, you know, Oh, it doesn't really matter what I do with my body. My body isn't important. Anyway, the soul is what counts. The spirit is what counts. And so that seems to be what's happening. The Corinthians are getting in some trouble because they have these beliefs. Look at how Paul responds. He says, the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord and the

Lord for the body. And this, this goes back actually to Genesis. Your body was made for something. Adam and Eve put in the garden of Eden. They're meant to be, um, God's agents in creation as Kings and Queens having dominion over the world. And they're meant to be doing it in fellowship with God, like in relationship with him. And that's not just how the Bible starts. That's also how it ends. That's how, that's how, uh, when heaven comes to earth, we're going to be restored back into this.

We looked at this last week, right? God is going to be all in all. We're going to be with him. He's going to be with us. That's what the body is made for is to be in that connection with the Lord. When this marriage of heaven and earth, this union, this is God's big project.

And then Paul says in verse 14, and God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. He's talking about resurrection. Your body was made for the Lord and it's going to be raised one day, not just your spirit, but your body. Then he says in verse 15, do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of, of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?

Never, never. He's, he's saying, he's saying, um, you are, you are members of Christ. Not you one day will be members of Christ. You are members of Christ right now. The final resurrection hasn't, hasn't happened yet, but the transformation has already started. You have been united to him in your spirit and your body and your spirit are connected. And so this has implications on your body, which is why he goes on to say this, or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her for as it's written, the two will become one flesh, but he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. You know, this is interesting because the men who are reading this probably would have been married. Paul isn't saying, don't be joined to a prostitute because you're supposed to be joined to your wife. He's saying when you're joined to a prostitute in the flesh, it's interrupting.

[11 : 12] Of course it's, you know, there's actually lots of good reasons to not go to prostitutes. Paul could have pointed to other things, but what he's arguing for right here is, um, I just think it's interesting. He's saying when you're joined to a prostitute in the flesh, it's interrupting the most important thing, which is your connection, your union with the Lord, the body that will one day be part of this renewed creation when God is going to be all in all. You know, right now that body is joined to the Lord through your spirit, your body and spirit work together.

The Corinthians have a low view of the body. They're like, oh, hey man, all things are permissible for me. I'm freeing Christ. And Paul is saying, what? Your body is precious and it's going to be raised one day. You are dishonoring it. So he says in verse 18, flee from sexual immorality, get away from it. Then he says, every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.

One of the greatest lines of the new Testament. You're not your own. You're not an orphan floating around. You're not, everything's not on you. You were bought with a price. You belong to God.

So glorify God in your body. We've probably all heard someone say that this is how ethics often work in our day. People say things like, hey man, as long as you're not hurting somebody else, that kind of thing doesn't really jive with resurrection thinking. Paul's argument is that you are hurting yourself and that's the problem because your body is a gift. The logic isn't since you get a new body one day, this one doesn't matter. Paul's logic is the opposite. Since you're going to get a new body, this one matters. Since you're going to get a new body, glorify God with the one you already have. In other words, the resurrection is not this cosmic reset button.

It's about transformation and renewal of what already is. This is where we, let's just reconsider an image from last Sunday that we talked about the metamorphosis of caterpillars into butterflies.

[13 : 31] I have had more conversations about caterpillars and butterflies this week than ever in my life. And I think that's because I think that was helpful for us. It was very helpful for me, a way of thinking about this. And when you have the caterpillar and the butterfly, the caterpillar doesn't vanish into nothing. And then you have a butterfly that pops out of thin air.

There's discontinuity, right? The butterfly is very different from the caterpillar, but there's also continuity. What is there continues somehow. There's transformation. There's continuity. We are connected somehow to the future glory that awaits us. And so the principle, if we're going to draw out the principle from 1 Corinthians chapter 6, we could say this way, our conduct in these bodies should correspond to the purpose of our future bodies. That seems to be the argument that Paul's making. Now, Christian moral philosophers have been wrestling with this for decades because this principle is especially hard to grapple with in the modern and now the, I guess what we call the postmodern West. Ethics has gotten increasingly complicated in the post-Christian West. And a great case study of this would be Google. I don't know if this is still a slogan of theirs or not, but years ago, one of their slogans was, do no harm. They recognized they had a lot of power. Do no harm. That sounds nice.

But that gets complicated when we can't agree on whose definition of harm we should be using. You see? So it sounds really virtuous, but once you get practical ethically, this gets confusing.

And so I would say that actually highlights one of the, I think one of the biggest fault lines in our increasingly divided country comes down to how do we think about what is good, what is right, what is ethical? A Christian philosopher who's wrestled a lot with this problem is a guy named Alistair McIntyre, and he wrote a book called *After Virtue*. And he made an argument there that a lot of other people, you'll see a lot of other people kind of using his ideas and have been for the last few decades.

He says that there is no way to think about ethics and morals or to make value judgments of any kind without understanding the purpose of the thing that you're evaluating. You actually just can't do it.

[15 : 58] So he's got this kind of silly example where he says, you know, you can't throw a watch at a cat, and when it misses the cat, say that's a bad watch. I've used this example here before. Are you laughing because you also think that it's a good idea to throw things at cats because...

I'm looking at my wife. Last time I made that joke, she said it was distasteful. I was bit by a cat when I was four, and I still have issues with cats, so...

He says, you know, the whole point, if you use a watch for something other than telling time, and you fault the watch for not being good at that thing, you're the problem. You know, you got to know what the thing's for, and in general, it just goes without saying that's true of everything.

You know, I was given a... I had a friend who used to be a contractor. He retired, gave me a bunch of tools, which is great, but there was a few things that I didn't know what they were for. I didn't know whether I should keep them or not.

I didn't know how to make any value judgment of if this thing is good or helpful because I don't know what it's made for. And so that's the problem of our day, according to McIntyre. He says, we can't agree on what people are for, and so it's impossible to agree on what is good.

[17 : 09] What does it mean to be a good person? Well, it depends on what you think the point of life is. And Paul is screaming at us from 2,000 years ago saying, I know what you're made for. I know you're made for glorious, resurrected, eternal, embodied life with God.

That's the point. And so how you live now should be shaped by that purpose. So have you ever thought that what you do practically in this life matters more because of the resurrection, not less?

I think sometimes we're tempted to think the opposite. We're tempted to think that because of the resurrection, like there is going to be a reset button and none of this is going to matter. Paul is saying the exact opposite. I mean, would we ever think when it comes to something like sexual ethics that we should bring resurrection life into our thinking?

If your body's made for the Lord, if one day God's going to be all in all and you're going to be united to him, live like it now. Treat your body like the temple that it is. But what happens if we take that principle and we look around?

Well, we can apply it to so many things because it isn't just our bodies. They're going to be transformed and renewed. It's going to be all of creation. Every single like all the stuff, everything is infused with this cosmic potential that's waiting to be realized in the Lord.

[18 : 31] So with the remaining minutes we have left, I just want to take a few. I want to take this principle from Paul in first Corinthians chapter six and consider some other areas that we can apply this to. And I'm just going to hit wave tops, not trying to build watertight arguments.

I just want you to see just how far the implications of the resurrection actually go. So first, the hope of resurrection means that our bodies are good and we should take care of them.

If that one's an easy one, it probably seems fairly obvious. But in our day, it's increasingly less obvious. That ancient form of thinking called Gnosticism that I mentioned has made a bit of a comeback in recent centuries.

You know, more and more you find people who actually seem to think that material things are less important than spiritual things. And our bodies are like, you know, prisons and the spirits need to be set free.

The famous speech, if you can remember back to high school English class, the to be or not to be speech from Shakespeare's Hamlet. You know, there's that line about shuffling off this mortal coil, which is very poetic, but really is a bunch of baloney because your body is not a coil that binds your spirit.

[19 : 41] It is a wonderful home that you should be grateful for. And that that thinking is infected. I mean, it's very prevalent in what has been called like New Age philosophy, but it's also crept into our churches.

So many worship songs and hymns over the last few hundred years have talked about one day escaping this world and going off to heaven. The Bible doesn't talk like that.

And it doesn't and it definitely doesn't talk that way about the body. The body's not a prison. It's a home. And Paul says this. I mean, look what he says in Second Corinthians chapter five. He says, for in this tent and he's using metaphors for the body, the tent here is the body in this tent, this body we grown.

It's tough. Longing to put on our heavenly dwelling. If indeed by putting it on, we may not be found naked for a while. We are still in this tent or this body. We grown being burdened because our bodies get old and they betray us and things go wrong.

But not that we would be unclothed, not that we'd be floating around his spirits, but that we would be further clothed with a new body so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

[20 : 50] So the body is not a prison. And you're going to it's your home and you're going to get a better one, but it's going to be physical like this one. And so you should care about this one.

So I'm going to give you two practical things that the early church did with this. Two ways that the early church said, okay, if this is true, then how does this affect how we treat the body?

I'm just going to give you two. And one is in regard to how they understood the body at the beginning of life. And one is in regard to how they understood the body at the end of life. So the first one is the beginning of life.

And I'm guessing in this room in particular, this one's probably going to not come off as very controversial. The early church was famous for the way that it pushed back on the very common practice of infanticide.

So in the Greco-Roman world, if you had a child or a baby you didn't want, it was very common just to expose it. You just left it out, just let it die. And Christians said, that is nuts.

[21 : 55] And they were famous for rescuing everybody else's kids. And the reason for that is because they had such a high view of the body. This is a potential temple of the Holy Spirit that we're talking about.

So you already have the Jewish understanding of people being made in the image of God. But it was Christians who married that with resurrection life. That's why they're the ones who were the first kind of the pro-life movement.

And it's one of the reasons why Christians today, we should still care deeply about abortion. Abortion is wrong for lots of reasons. It's killing. But the resurrection gives us even more reason to not want to kill a human being.

As soon as there's life in the womb, man, this is a body that God made. This is a gift and a treasure. We should never destroy it. And the resurrection is part of why we think that's true.

I mean, if Paul can tell the Corinthians, you're not your own. And we would apply that to our own bodies. How much more does that apply to other people's bodies? Our bodies were bought with a price because they're good gifts.

[23 : 01] So that's one sort of way the early church was distinct from the culture around it. Now, the second area or a second area where the church was distinct is in how they treated the body after someone died.

Now, I want to say something up front. We're going to talk about what do we do when people die? What do we do with the body? And I want to say up front, there's no command on scripture on this. So I am not about to suggest that cremation is sin.

That is morally wrong. I'm not saying that at all. And almost in the last 10 years, I would say the majority of the funerals that I've done have been cremations. And I will continue to do many more.

It's just a very common practice today. But I want you to see that we could think about this differently and maybe we should think about it differently than we're used to. Okay? The earliest Christians were convinced that how they treated the body mattered.

And in order to understand why, you have to understand the context in which they lived. Almost everyone else around them. I don't know for sure that it was everywhere.

[24 : 08] But it's very pervasive that for many of the people in the communities that these Christians were living in, they had some sort of view in which the body was seen as less than the spirit.

So creation in those days was not just about, well, we have to do something with the body, may as well burn it. It was a kind of religious practice in of itself. Cremation is when you took the body and destroyed it with fire as a kind of judgment on the body so that the spirit could be set free from the prison of the body.

But Christians read 1 Corinthians 15. And they're like, man, Paul says that this body is like a seed that grows into a tree. And so they decided, let's not burn our dead. Let's pick up this old Jewish practice and carefully and lovingly take the good bodies of the people who we love and plant them in the ground like seeds.

Because one day they're going to grow into something glorious. And we probably don't appreciate just how countercultural that was.

So here's what one scholar says about this practice of burial. It's possible to trace the spread of the gospel across the Roman Empire by focusing upon cremation.

[25 : 22] For while the Romans burned their dead, the Christians buried theirs. In a similar manner, the last of the non-Christian emperors, Julian the Apostate, identified care of the dead as one of the factors that contributed to the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman world.

The church historian Philip Schaaf, he lived during the 19th century, and he was an ecclesial historian. He too identified Christians display of decency to the human body and showing care for the dead as one of the main reasons for the church's rapid conquest of the ancient world.

I mean, that is astonishing. Would you ever think that burying people instead of cremating them would be called one of the main reasons that the gospel spread?

Now, I know that there's probably just lots of questions about this. If you have cremated a loved one, it is okay. You have not sinned. And I think when we account for the financial burden and the financial cost of burial today, this is complicated for us.

I just want to encourage you to think about how far the implications of the resurrection go if we have eyes to see them. And here's a way of comparing it that might make it just a little easier.

[26 : 35] Do you know why in the modern West, probably every wedding you've ever been to, the bride wears white? Do you know where that comes from? All of our wedding pageantry, almost all of it, if not all of it, comes from a distinctly Christian tradition.

And it's because in Ephesians 5, Paul says that marriage between a man and a woman, actually, it's not about them, it's about Christ and the church. He says this thing we're waiting for, the marriage of heaven and earth, this union that's going to blow everybody's mind, that's what marriage is about.

Your marriage is, our marriage is, they're telling that story, at least that's what they're supposed to. And so the Bible says that Jesus is waiting for the church to be presented to him and that when she will be presented, she's going to be clothed in white.

And so Christians took this seriously. They said, well, if marriage is about the gospel, then let's make our weddings tell the story really well. And so the groom, there's a reason that he stands at the front and he waits.

And then the bride comes in and she is presented to him in white, in splendor, like the church. And we've been acting out the gospel. People that don't even believe the gospel are acting it out in front of our very eyes.

[27 : 45] So here's the point. If a woman was to come to me and say, is it a sin? I'm thinking about not wearing a white dress. Is it a sin to wear a different colored dress? I would say, of course not. I think you should at least think about it, you know.

I think there's good reason. I think there's good reason for wearing white. And it's not just because of tradition, but because if we do your wedding well, this is going to help tell the gospel story.

And I think that's why burial is at least worth considering. Not as an imperative. Again, we know it can be very difficult, but I think we should at least consider it. A bride in white tells a great gospel story.

And the loving burial of our dead can tell a great resurrection story. And of course, every funeral I've ever done, whether it was burial or cremation, we're going to tell that story. But we should just think about how, from the very beginning, we should consider why Christians have thought along these lines.

Now would also be a good time to say that right after this service, I'm leading the fly out of the country. So if you have any difficult questions, you can talk to Andrew Midgett. And I don't even think he's in the room.

[28 : 51] He left ahead of time. He knew this was coming. So our bodies are good. If you believe in the resurrection, it should make you, regardless of what we do when people die, the way you care for bodies, your body and other people's body, man, it should be with so much care and so much tenderness.

But it's not just our bodies. The hope of resurrection means that creation is good and we should take care of it. The first command given to Adam was about taking care of the world. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and take dominion over the animals.

It cultivated, it was a garden that God planted after all. And since there's this future world that's going to be transformed from this one, if we're going to take the principle from 1 Corinthians 6, that means we should care more about this one, not less.

Now, I don't know if this is true of all of your experience. My experience growing up, not just in the communities that I was raised in, but also just me personally.

I was guilty of thinking about this, or thinking along these lines. I grew up kind of just dismissive of environmental issues, partly because they've been so politicized.

[30 : 01] And so if you've got an allegiance to a political party, this can be difficult, depending on what the issue is. But also because of the belief that, hey man, the world's going to burn, right?

There's going to be a new one. It's not that big of a deal. But while I don't have the political answers to pollution and environmental destruction, I am convinced those things are theological problems before they're political ones.

If we use the logic of 1 Corinthians 6, then knowing that this world will one day be transformed, and knowing that we have been entrusted with this one while we're here, we should be taking extra care of it.

Resurrection and the restoration of the new heavens, the new earth, should give us more reason to care about this one, not less. And we should be treating it according to its purpose. What is the world for?

What's the stuff for? What are forests for? What are the seas for? We should be thinking about that. That should inform how we steward this stuff.

[31 : 02] Even things like animal cruelty. You know, there's a reason that for centuries, Christians have been the ones who've cared about that. At least they should care. Because animals are a gift, and we're supposed to care for them.

They're a gift for food, but they're also something to be entrusted with. It's actually, I think, interesting to see how often the care of animals shows up in the Bible in places that you just don't expect it, and frankly, feels weird.

Like, it's hard for us with our modern eyes to even reckon why this would even be there. An example would be, we're not going to read it, but next is 34. God's renewing the covenant with Israel. They're at Mount Sinai.

They've had this terrible incident with the golden calf, and so he's renewing the covenant, and it's all big picture stuff. You know, he's talking about how he's going to give them the promised land. He's going to drive out their enemies before them.

He tells them, he reminds them of the commands not to participate in idolatry. He reminds them of the great feasts that they're to keep to honor him, and then at the very end of this covenant renewal, it says, you shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk, which seems really, I don't know, like, strange that that's what God wanted to talk about right there, and, you know, I don't know exactly why it's there, and I don't even know exactly why that's wrong.

[32 : 20] I got ideas about that. A lot of people think that, you know, it just, it seems vulgar to take the life, the milk that's given for this baby goat, and then cook the goat in it. Like, we should be more sensitive to even the life of animals, or at the end of, at the end of Jonah, Jonah, you've got the story where you've got a prophet, and God sent him to Nineveh because God cares about the Ninevites.

He really wants to show them mercy. Jonah is furious because Jonah hates the Ninevites, and he wants God to destroy them, and so God is like, is like trying to convince Jonah that these people are worthy of mercy, and look how the story ends.

Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the right hand from their left, and the last words of this letter, and also much cattle. Like, it ends with God appealing to the cows, or about the cows, which is a bit, I don't know.

I don't know about you. I read that, and I don't, my mind doesn't go there. I don't think about what God's purposes in the world, caring about this stuff, but he does because everything he made matters to him. God didn't make anything he doesn't care about.

This may be a different way of putting it, and what we do with this stuff around us is never in vain. Everything we do is the potential to tell the resurrection story. We are to be great stewards of this world because we know it's going to be transformed.

[33 : 39] Look, there's more we could talk about, which we're just not going to get into because of time. The resurrection should affect our understanding of justice, of the arts, of your vocation at your workplace.

Friends, I mean, do you realize what Paul's saying to you? It actually doesn't matter what you do, how big or small it is, everything you do matters. If you cut grass for a living, if you work in the hospital, if you teach children, if you're a lawyer, if you're a stay-at-home mom, your work, whatever your work is in your body that you're doing every day, it's never in vain.

If you are fixing someone's car, it's not in vain because you are stewarding the things in this world. Stuff matters, and when you take care of it, it's good.

So we don't have time to touch on everything. I want to end by highlighting one last implication of the resurrection. The hope of resurrection should affect how we do evangelism.

Now, evangelism is the word that we have given to the act of spreading the news of the gospel. People have to know. People have to be told about the story of Jesus and what he has done, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, that one day he is going to return, and we tell them that so that they would be saved but what do we mean when we say that?

[35 : 01] When we talk about salvation, what are we talking about? What are they saved from? What are they saved into? I think a lot of us have taken a bit of a two-dimensional, kind of a flattened understanding of salvation that doesn't reckon with, frankly, just the beauty of what scripture presents when it talks about salvation.

A lot of us, when we talk about salvation, we think of salvation as mainly something that God is going to do in the future. When you're saved, that means you get to go to heaven and you don't have to go to hell, and so it's kind of like a necessary insurance policy that you will one day have to cash in.

But it's not exactly that that's untrue. There's certainly elements that they're absolutely true. We don't want people to suffer eternally. We don't want them to be destroyed. We want them to live forever with the Lord.

But the Bible has even more to say about salvation. It's not just about what will happen in the future. You know, the Bible talks about salvation. If you're a Christian, salvation, God's saving work is something that has happened in your past.

It's something that is happening right now. Like you didn't just get saved once. God saved you and he's still saving you and one day he will save you. And that saving work affects everything about your life.

[36 : 15] There's nothing that it doesn't touch. So there's these two stories. I want to show you how Jesus in an area where he talked about saving. There's these two stories that are told together in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

And it's the story of Jesus going to a man's house named Jairus, very wealthy man who had a very sick daughter. And so Jesus is summoned to heal this little girl. And on the way, he gets interrupted by a woman who's hemorrhaging blood.

And so she reaches out and she touches him and there's this kind of, there's this whole scene that unfolds and he stops and he miraculously heals this lady. But he gets delayed and so the little girl dies before Jesus can get there.

And so Jesus decides to go anyway and he brings the girl back from the dead. It's an incredible kind of double whammy story where you get these two miracles. But the language in the story is remarkable.

When the woman sees Jesus, she says, if I touch him, I will be made well. And after he heals her, Jesus says, your faith has made you well. And then on the way to raise the little girl, he tells the family, don't fear, she will be made well.

[37 : 19] The thing is, that's how your Bible says it, but the Greek word being translated made well is literally the Greek word to save. So you could just as easily say this way, the woman sees Jesus and said, if I touch him, I will be saved.

And Jesus tells the woman, your faith has saved you. And he tells the family of the little girl, don't worry, she will be saved. Well, what was the woman saved from?

From the effect of disease. Jesus would rebuke the, you know, he would heal on the Sabbath and people would be upset. And he said, how could you be upset at me healing? This is a child of Abraham. Should we not care about their body?

It's a saving act when Jesus does these miracles. And what was the little girl saved from? Well, she's saved from death. Salvation is not just this insurance policy that you cash in at the end of life.

As one writer says it, God doesn't save souls. He saves holes. His saving work is for your whole life. And it's happening right now. And that ultimate saving act is of course going to be resurrection.

[38 : 24] Not just of your soul, but of your body and of all this stuff, man, it's all coming back. Which is why Paul says this in Romans 8. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

And not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit. We, with creation, we groan inwardly. Like we're all waiting for this moment. The whole world's waiting for. As we wait, what?

We eagerly wait for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For this, for in this hope, we were saved. This is what salvation has to do with.

And so when we do evangelism, there's a thousand ways of describing what the gospel means. And some of you are probably even better evangelists than I am. Some people just have a gift for it.

In fact, my friend Bruce right here, he's an evangelist. I hear about how he tells people about Jesus. I wish I had the effect on people that he seems to have on people.

[39 : 24] There's a thousand ways of doing it. The Bible gives you words and pictures and there's more than one way to talk about it. But we have got to give people a sense of the scale and the scope of God's redemptive work.

Sometimes evangelism can be all about getting people to accept a series of facts, of true facts, and then getting them to say a prayer. And of course, we want them to know the facts about Jesus and everything that the Bible says.

And of course, we want them to pray. But we want them to see that getting saved is more than a shift that would be like changing your political party. You know, I didn't used to identify as a Christian, but you know, now I do. I just had to change a heart about the whole thing.

Salvation is about having your whole life transformed, about realizing that God has put on flesh and on the cross, he defeated the power of evil and he rose from the dead and he reigns his Lord over everything and one day will destroy evil forever.

But even now, his kingdom has begun and you and I are actively participating in it. We are part of the saving work that's happening in the world. And some will say, well, what do you mean?

[40 : 27] How can the kingdom be here already? The world's still a really broken place. There's so much pain and suffering. That is precisely where the church comes in. We are meant to be the sign of what's to come.

We're supposed to be living out our future purpose. And that's what Christians have been doing for 2,000 years. You know, so many people don't realize that when we look at the modern West for all of its problems, anything good that we want to say about it, anything that's like any virtue comes directly from Christianity.

And there are, man, there are so many books that have been written about this. You will find non-Christians that will even admit this. I mean, I've literally read books written by atheists and they have said the entire modern West owes pretty much everything to Christianity.

All of democratic ideals and virtues, the renaissance of the arts that happened centuries ago, the scientific method, the university system, the abolishment of slavery, all of this came from Christians who believed Paul when he said that whatever you do in life, it's not in vain.

People need to be saved. People need to know the gospel. They need to hear about Jesus. And because of what he did, God has a plan to forgive them for all their sin and to give them a future promise that will blow their minds.

[41 : 40] But they also need us to do what Jesus taught his disciples to do, not just to tell them this stuff, but to show them this stuff, to take care of their bodies, to feed them when they're hungry and to go beyond their bodily needs to give them truth and beauty.

We can tend to talk about evangelism like it's a spiritual thing and social justice like it's a physical thing. The resurrection means these things have to go together. They always go together.

It's why our mission statement as a church is make disciples and push back darkness. There's just two ways of trying to say this. We got to tell people the story. We got to do the work that feels very spiritual, but we also got to do the work that's very physical because we're going to be resurrected one day and bodies and souls, these things go together.

Paul was an itinerant preacher and yet he was emphatic on caring for the poor and I guarantee you he didn't see them as two totally separate ministries. He said, I'm an apostle called by God. This is what I'm called to do, to care for people.

People need to be saved, caught up in this cosmic story of redemption and then they need to be given the privilege of participating in this kingdom right now. Because we're getting future bodies, these bodies matter.

[42 : 52] Because we're getting a future world, this world matters. As we close, friends, if you are here and you're not yet a Christian, it's easy to come to church.

It's something else entirely to give your whole life to the risen Lord, to say that you're not your own, to say that you're not your own, to allow him to purchase you, to be his son and his servant.

That is no small thing. And if you haven't done that yet, there's hundreds of books designed to help you find your purpose and meaning in life. None of them can hold a candle to the purpose that God's book will give you.

Your purpose is to live forever, to glorify God as a cultivator, a creative agent in the world, and you can live it right now. And it really doesn't matter what you do for a living.

It doesn't matter what your circumstances are. You have the dignity of God in what you do. Everything you do, none of it is ever in vain when you're doing it for him.

[44 : 00] Every one of us gets the same privilege. It's true that nothing in this life compares to the glory of what's coming, but everything we do in this life can tell a great story about that day and what we can expect.

Let's pray. Lord, we want to thank you so much that you have given each of us the dignity of working for you, of living for you.

We want to thank you that whether we are kings or servants, whether we have very popular jobs or unpopular jobs, no matter what we do, you tell us that you think it's important and it's not in vain.

I pray that you would help us as a church to live in light of the resurrection. We are very often guilty of forgetting that what we do in our bodies now tells the story about the future life.

Help us remember, Lord, and help us to be a faithful witness to the world around us. In Jesus' name, amen.