

Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God

Date: 19 December 2016
Services: 730, 930 (T), 5pm, 630pm (adapted for carols)
Series: This I believe
Title: The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting
Passages: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Outline: **The resurrection of the body**
The life everlasting
(all) This I believe!

- When will you die?
- And you're already thinking – well – that's a nice cheery thought right there for a Sunday morning/afternoon....
- And of course you want to come back to me straight away and say 'well Mark, how am I meant to know that?'
- But actually, I'm being a pain and it's a trick question.
- Because by the end of this sermon, I want you to be convinced that your answer should be – Mark – I'm never *actually* going to die – I have **everlasting life**.
- What did Jesus say in John 11:25?
- Jesus has been talking to Mary about the death of her brother Lazarus... He told her, her brother would rise again.
- Mary said – yes he will rise again on the last day and Jesus answers:
- *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.*
- Will **live** – even though they **die**...?
- ...and whoever **lives** by **believing** in **me** will **never die**!!
- Die a **physical** death – yes – in which a person leaves this world... but not *actually* die...
- *Whoever lives by believing in me will NEVER die... //*
- Do you know what Jesus' very next words to Mary were?
- **"Do you believe this"**?
- And I want to ask you – **do you believe this**?
- You stand often and say that you do!
- **I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.**
- What are you actually saying and what difference does it make?
- So a very simple outline:
 1. Resurrection of the body
 2. Life everlasting
 3. This I believe – as I review and recap the series (8 weeks on the Apostles Creed)
- First

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1. RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

- Have a look with me at 1 Thessalonians 4:14 – *we believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him*
- What happens when go through your physical death?
- You go to be with the Lord!
- The Apostle Paul says in 2 Cor 5:6-8 that to depart from the body is to be at home with the Lord
- He writes in Philippians 1:22-23 - *if I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far... //*
- Friends, when we leave our bodies here, the Bible's teaching is that we will be with the Lord....
- That's why Paul starts this section by saying that he does not want us to be ignorant about those who fall asleep... or to grieve like the rest of people who have no hope...
- We grieve for those who die a **physical** death... of **course** we grieve...
- ...we grieve our dear friend John Cotton whose funeral we celebrated during the week.... We will miss him... he leaves a profound gap... we can hardly believe we will not see him again...
- Of **course** we grieve... of course **Patty** and the family grieves...
- But our grief is not like that of the **unbeliever** who has no **hope**
- I'm sure you've been to funerals of unbelievers up at Drysdale funerals led by a celebrant and the grief is one of utter **despair**... for they have **no** hope of seeing their loved one again – no hope that they are anything other than **dead!**
- But if what Jesus said to Mary is true... than **John** – even though he **died** yet will he **lives** and because he lived believing in Jesus... he didn't **actually die** //
- His **body** died //
- But **he** departed to be with the **Lord**... and that's **fantastic** for him... and one day we will see **him again**.
- ...and one day as we read at this funeral from 2 Cor 5 – *we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a **building** from God, an **eternal house** in heaven, not built by human hands.*
- Here is what will happen – from the passage in front of you (v16): *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*
- You see what's described here? Jesus will return – bringing with him the souls of those who have been with him since their departure and then they will be joined with their resurrected bodies... //
- Yet how will the Lord manage to bring us together with our bodies when people have been cremated and their ashes spread all over the place or cemeteries built over with buildings or people lost at sea?
- Hardly a problem for the God of the Bible for whom nothing is impossible....! //
- What will those bodies be like?

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- If **Jesus'** resurrected body is anything to go by – there will be both **continuity** and **discontinuity** with our present bodies...
- Mary only recognised Jesus when he said her **name** in the old familiar way
- Yet the two disciples on their way to Emmaus were actively **kept** from recognising Jesus – because otherwise they would have realised who he was...
- And remember **Jesus'** resurrected body **ate** and **drank** with the disciples and yet was able to appear in a room **suddenly** when all the doors were **locked!!**
- What a great and amazing day that will be...! ///
- what happens if you're still alive on that day when Jesus returns –? Glad you asked - v17 *After that we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...*
- And Paul says in 1 Cor 15 - *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – ⁵²in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*
- So if you're still alive when Jesus comes... at that moment you'll be transformed and receive your resurrection bodies...
- And so says v17 - *we will be with the Lord forever...* (we'll explore that together shortly)...
- But don't miss the **last** words of the chapter....
- Therefore v18 - *encourage each other with these words...*
- That's a great exhortation... "encourage one another..."
- What does that look like – to encourage each other with these words?
- Reminding each other – talking – "isn't this wonderful?" – exploring – "hey – if we die – we won't actually die..."
- We'll go to be with the Lord...
- We will come back with him!
- We'll be joined to our resurrected bodies!
- We'll be reunited with those we love!
- We'll be with the Lord forever...!
- That's morning tea/supper conversation worth having...!
- After church you can talk about the **weather** or **politics** or **real estate** or the **cricket** or what you're doing for **Christmas**... or you can **encourage** one another with these words and **celebrate** together all that is to come!!
- For friends... we believe in the resurrection of the body!!! It changes everything about death and dying...

2. THE LIFE EVERLASTING

- So we've been resurrected... we're with Jesus in the air... we will be with the Lord forever...
- **Then** what...?
- Come on – I want the next bit – what happens **then!!** ///

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- We don't know a lot about the life everlasting...
- **Here's** what we know....
- Remember – we'll have **physical** bodies – we will be in a **new creation** – a new one of these – new heavens and new earth...
- Please don't be thinking we'll be forever floating around on the **clouds** with **harps** and **halos**...
- We saw in a series earlier in the year that the new creation will be beautiful... without comparison to **anything** here...
- And we heard in the first reading that it will not involve any **pain** or **sorrow** or **sickness** or **death**...
- And we've also heard before that **all** evil will be dealt with so - so no **sin** – no **temptation**...
- We also know that we will **know things** then we **can't** or don't know now.
- Here's how Paul puts it in 1 Cor 13: *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in **part**; then I shall **know fully**, even as I am fully known.*
-so we'll have clarity...
- And our relationship with God will be perfected – Rev 21 – the words run through Scripture like a golden thread but will reach fulfillment in the forever life which awaits - *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*
- But here is the best bit...
- Rev 22 – the very last chapter of the Bible... v3b *The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴They will see his face.....*
- We will serve Jesus the Lamb....
- **And we will see Jesus' face**... We will see our glorious Saviour Jesus **in** all his **glory**...
- And... when we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no **less** days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun. ///
- Yes, **I believe in the life everlasting!!**
- Again brothers and sisters – **encourage** one another with these words..
- This is what Advent is all about... our series couldn't be more appropriate!
- The **return** of **Christ** – the **resurrection** of the **body** and the **life everlasting**...
- This is what the coming of Christ the **first** time **set up** and **guaranteed**...
- Its **because** God entered our world to deal with sin and reconcile us to himself – that we can look forward with great anticipation to the **resurrection** of the **body** and the **life everlasting**...
- Not possible had Jesus not come to do what he did!!
- And when we live as though the stuff of **this** world and this **life** is what matters... then - well it's an insult to God who gave of his Son so all that we've explored can be the case!
- And when we live only and passionately for the things of **this** world... then we **seriously miss out** on the comfort and peace and hope and perspective this brings...

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- The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting means we ought to be living as if life **here** is **temporary**... because it **is**...!!
- We ought to be living as if we have some **hope** for the future – because we most **certainly do!**
- We ought to be living as if **THIS** is what actually matters to us... because surely **this changes everything**...! ////
- When will you die?
- You **won't**....!! for those who die believing in Jesus will **live** even if they **die**... //
- **I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting... ! ///**
- Now let's bring this series to a close.

3. (ALL) THIS I BELIEVE

- At the beginning of this series I said that I wanted to do a series on the Apostles Creed because often what we say in church, we have been saying for years, but don't have a clue what it's about or what it means or what its significance is...
- So, I wanted us to **know** what we **believe** and to **believe** what we **say**... I wanted us to be **clear** and **confident**...
- **And I expressed the hope** that it may help us stand firm in what we believe... to **take a stand**... to become **immoveable**... **convinced**... to be people of **conviction** and therefore **courage**...
- Courage to take a **stand**...
- So friends – here is where we've come:
- **Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth:** privileged to call God Father... all things made through him and for him
- **Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord** – that the baby whose birth we celebrate next week is the promised Messiah and the eternal son of God
- **Conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary** - that through the miraculous intervention of God, Jesus was God turned up in a person....
- **Suffered, crucified, died, buried, descended** – that he suffered for us – before and during his crucifixion – that all hell descended upon him on the cross – so that our sin might be dealt with and that we might be reconciled to him....
- **Rose, ascended, seated and will come to judge** – that he didn't stay dead... and then ascended to the Father where he lives to intercede for us and will return one day – any day - to judge
- **Holy Spirit, Holy Church and communion of saints** – that he gave his Holy Spirit, formed us as his people as his body - the church - and that there is an unbreakable bond between Christians throughout the **world** and throughout **eternity**
- **Forgiveness of sins** – we saw that forgiveness was our great **need**, a very great **blessing** and that it came at great **cost**
- And finally – here's where all this is heading... what it's all been about – because of all that we've seen in the creed so far.... then the final goal of everything we believe is possible...
- **The resurrection of the body and life everlasting**
- **THIS - I BELIEVE!**