

Sermon preached at OCC, 9 November 2025

*Lord God, may your Word. Be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Luke 20:27-38

### ***Resurrection Life***

If someone asks us what makes Christianity different from other religions, we may answer that resurrection life is one of the differences. It is only Christianity that offers resurrection life to those who believe in Christ Jesus. But how do we explain it? Let's think about it this way.

### ***The Mark of the Resurrection life***

What do you call the first one? – a triangle - more specifically, it looks like a right triangle. Here is another – they are also triangles. Are they right triangles as well? – No, they aren't. How do you know? (Your answers). Now I'm trying to put a mathematical symbol of the right angle – it looks like  $\perp$ . But I'm going to put it not in the first one but in one of these triangles. What nonsense, you may think! It is because the first triangle looks like a right triangle. But mathematically speaking, the first triangle is not a right triangle unless it has the symbol of a right angle ( $\perp$ ). In the case of the second one, although it doesn't look like a right triangle, if I put the symbol of the right angle, it has to be a right triangle. You can see that I'm telling you this metaphorically. We may call the second triangle with the symbol of right angle Christians' earthly life. It doesn't look right in the present, but because of the symbol or mark of the right angle, we will know that it will be a right triangle. It also means that resurrection life is like the first triangle with the mark of the right angle. The apostle Paul says that we were marked in Christ with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, when we believed in Christ in Ephesians 1:13. When we were baptised by water and the Holy Spirit, we are also partaking in the already but not yet consummated God's kingdom life - resurrection life. With this in mind, we will think about resurrection and the different understandings of immortality. It helps us understand the resurrection life in Luke, thereby, the life of the church today.

### ***False views on immortality***

The belief in the resurrection is uniquely Christian, rooted in Jesus' resurrection and has become an essential part of the Christian faith. The New Testament teaches us that Jesus was

raised from the dead.<sup>1</sup> We also learn that those who believe in Christ will be raised like him in a general resurrection at the end of time,<sup>2</sup> it is when ‘there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.’<sup>3</sup> Resurrection is an essential tenet of the Christian faith. As Paul says, “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain.”<sup>4</sup> Different from this Christian belief, there are also sayings about immortality or life after death.

Especially the Greeks, led by Plato, held to a dualistic system in that they believed the spirit to be good while physical things, such as the human body, were bad. They could never accept the resurrection of the physical body because the ideal, from their perspective, was a spirit freed from the physical body. Therefore, the Greek understanding of immortality is incompatible with the Christian understanding of resurrection, where body and soul are bound together. There is another discipline that holds a similar line of thought to Plato is Buddhism.

Buddhists view life and death as a continuum, believing that consciousness (or a form of energy) continues after death and may be reborn. This subtle consciousness cannot be created or destroyed but can change form. Death can be an opportunity for liberation from the cycle of life, especially when people obtain enlightenment in their lifetime. We also have a biblical understanding of immortality.

In the New Testament, immortality and resurrection intertwine in a “now” (immortality) and “future” (resurrection) relationship. Various New Testament verses portray the "now" dimension (immortality). In John 17:3, Jesus prays, -“This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” Although the prayer is being said ‘now,’ Jesus makes it connected to eternal life – the future. It is because eternal life is a matter of relationship with the Father - something that will be fully realized only in the future. It is how the Christian understanding of immortality begins here and now based on the relationship with God. It is like a tringle that has potential to be a right triangle as it bears the mark of the right angle. The relationship with God is also important to understand resurrection life in Luke.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5; John 20:1-18

<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:12-57; 2 Corinthians 4:14, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 24:15; Also see John 5:28-29

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:14

### ***Jesus' Teaching on Resurrection***

In Luke 20:27-38, we learn a few things about resurrection life. First, all earthly relationships are reconfigured through God and God only when it comes to resurrection life. In his comments to Sadducees, Jesus does not address other needs, such as the physical needs of companionship, which are met by marriage in this life. It implies that in resurrection life, any barriers separating a person from another by any physical needs will be eliminated in that sin-free environment. As such, the need for intimacy will be met in a broad range of relationships in that the primary one is with God. Second, the resurrected people will not die as they become like angels. Sadducees didn't believe not only in resurrection but also in angels. In both Testaments, angels are depicted as heavenly beings. They are the servants of God who often deliver God's message to people. When it comes to the resurrected body of Christ, the risen Jesus appeared before the disciples behind locked doors,<sup>5</sup> he also asked them to give him something to eat.<sup>6</sup> Third, for God, those who are in a covenantal relationship with God are alive as God's blessings are still in force now. Resurrection life cannot be separated from the relationship with God. While we may expect that resurrection life will be full of joy, as described in Revelation, we also acknowledge that these things are beyond our ability to understand or fully appreciate.

### ***Living as Marked People***

The question that Sadducees asked Jesus was about the Jewish law of levirate marriage by which a man may be obliged to marry his brother's widow to protect her and secure her life. Yet it only revealed their ignorance or misunderstanding of scripture and the power of God. Still, it gave us a chance to think about it as if a child in the story wants to make sure her mother loves her even if she is doing cheeky things. The story together with resurrection life works like a mirror to show us – the church – who we are and how we live. While confessing our faith in God, we may also want to be reassured in the life to come. Sometimes bearing the mark of Christ can cause difficulties in life especially when our faith clashes with the current dominant culture. When we think we can't forgive someone for something, the right angle of Christ in us may ask us to forgive them and love them back instead. Maybe all we can do is

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<sup>5</sup> John 20:19

<sup>6</sup> Luke 24:41-43

let God's right angle transforms us according to His love that covers the multitudes of sins.  
May God help us be obedient to this love till the end. Amen.