

Title: Living in the Hope of Bodily Resurrection: The Church as the Meeting Place of Heaven and Earth

The resurrection of Jesus Christ radically redefines not only our future but also how we live now. For those of us who have embraced the hope of bodily resurrection, the fear of death no longer holds its grip. This understanding doesn't merely add another dimension to our theology; it is the very essence of our Christian faith. Eternal life, promised to us in Christ, is not limited to our spirits going to a distant heaven--it is about the complete restoration of the whole human being: spirit, soul, and body. Through this lens, the Church stands as the meeting place where heaven and earth converge, showing the world a glimpse of God's new creation breaking into the present.

The moment we come to the full understanding that eternal life refers to physical humans living forever, something profound happens. We are freed from the fear of death. This is more than a theological idea; it transforms how we live. Human behavior is often driven by the inherent fear of death, what psychologists call the "worm at the core." People pursue wealth, power, or legacy to protect their lives from the inevitable. But when we understand that eternal life has already been secured for us physically in Christ, and we will rise bodily just as Jesus did, this fear loses its power.

This perspective shift allows us to live freely, no longer driven by self-preservation but by an abundance of life. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that death has been defeated--not just spiritually, but physically. It means that even if we die, we will live. Our bodies will be raised, and death will not have the final word. When this truth settles into our hearts, it changes how we face suffering, loss, and the challenges of daily life.

The Church is not just a gathering of believers; it is where heaven and earth meet. It is where God shows the world what His new creation looks like--a community of people living under the rule of life, not death. Jesus' resurrection inaugurates this reality. As God's people, we live where sin in the flesh is condemned, where death no longer reigns, and where life in Christ prevails. This doesn't mean we won't die

physically, but it does mean that even in death, we live with the hope of bodily resurrection.

This changes everything. Knowing that our bodies are integral to who we are, and that they will be redeemed and transformed, reshapes our present lives. We no longer view our physical bodies as temporary vessels that we will shed for a purely spiritual existence. Instead, we understand that our bodies will be part of our eternal experience with God. This hope of resurrection isn't just a distant future reality--it's a truth that defines how we live now.

The fear of death drives much of the world's behavior. People seek to preserve their lives, often avoiding suffering at all costs. The pursuit of health, youth, and security are driven by this fear. But the resurrection of Jesus changes our thinking. We no longer have to fear that death will strip us of everything. Eternal life, which includes the physical resurrection of our bodies, has already been promised to us.

This gives us a new perspective on suffering. Suffering, in light of the resurrection, is not something to be feared. Because we know our lives are secure in Christ, we can endure hardship with the confidence that it is not the end. Suffering becomes part of God's work in our lives, shaping us into His image. It doesn't mean suffering is easy or desirable, but it means that it no longer threatens to destroy us. We can face pain with the hope that God is at work, even in our darkest moments.

This hope of bodily resurrection frees us to serve others. When we no longer need to protect our lives from death, we can give ourselves fully to others. We can pour out our time, energy, and resources without fear of losing anything, because we know that in Christ, we have everything. The fear that serving others might diminish our own well-being vanishes when we realize that our lives are abundantly secure in Christ.

The Church, therefore, is meant to be a foretaste of this new creation. It is where the power of the resurrection takes root. But this can only happen when we grasp the centrality of bodily resurrection. Without it, the Church risks falling into a dualistic mindset, where the body and spirit are seen as separate and at odds. This

dualism creates an inner conflict, where the body seeks its own satisfaction while the spirit pulls in a different direction.

The moment the body feels secure in the promise of resurrection, this conflict ends. The body is no longer driven by fear or self-preservation. It knows it is safe in the hands of the Creator, who will raise it up. This allows the body and spirit to live in harmony, both aligned with the hope of resurrection and the life of Christ.

When the Church fully embraces the hope of bodily resurrection, its mission and purpose become clear. We live not as people waiting to escape this world, but as people eager for the restoration of all things. This changes how we engage with the world. Instead of retreating from it, we become active participants in God's work of renewal, knowing that our efforts point to the future restoration of creation.

This resurrection hope gives us the strength to face hardship with a sense of purpose. Just as Jesus' suffering led to resurrection, so too will our suffering lead to renewal. This doesn't mean we seek out suffering, but it means we no longer fear it. We know that suffering cannot separate us from the life we have in Christ.

The Church is meant to be the place where resurrection life is lived out. It should be a community where people experience healing, restoration, and renewal. When the Church lives in the hope of bodily resurrection, it becomes a place where fear no longer reigns and love abounds. It becomes a place where people serve one another, free from the need to protect their own lives.

However, the Church has often lost its power because it has focused too much on a dualistic view--where the spirit is separated from the body, and eternal life is seen as something purely spiritual. This dualism has diminished the Church's ability to reflect heaven on earth. Without the full understanding of bodily resurrection, believers may find comfort in knowing God's love, but they lack the empowerment to live in victory over death. Without this bodily hope, the Church mirrors the world's obsession with self-preservation, fighting to survive rather than thriving in the fullness of life promised by Christ.

When the Church neglects the resurrection, it falls into the same self-preservation mindset that drives the world. People strive to protect and prolong their physical lives at all costs, often leading to conflict and competition.

The lack of resurrection hope leads to a form of Christianity that mirrors this behavior, focusing on survival rather than on the transformative power of eternal life. As James wrote, people ask but don't receive because they want to use their gains for selfish purposes. This mentality has seeped into the Church, keeping it from fully walking in the victory of Christ.

The true victory of the Church lies in the rediscovery of the bodily resurrection. Until believers fully embrace the reality that their entire being--body included--is secured unto eternal life, they will remain bound by the fear of death. Jesus' resurrection was not merely spiritual; it was a full-bodied event that demonstrated the future awaiting us--a restored and glorified humanity. When we grasp this truth, we are freed from the fear of death and empowered to live as agents of restoration in the world.

In conclusion, the Church must rediscover the centrality of the resurrection in its theology and practice. This understanding will empower believers to live without fear of death, confident that their future includes the resurrection of their bodies and the renewal of all creation. When the Church lives in this resurrection hope, it will no longer mirror the world's obsession with survival but will become a place where heaven and earth meet, revealing the victory of life over death. This hope fuels our mission, transforms our lives, and allows us to walk in the full victory that Christ secured through His death and resurrection.

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