

Resurrection, here and now

[Romans 6:3-11](#)

In the reading from his great theological statement, the letter to the Romans, we just heard Paul telling us that that in our baptism we died with Christ and so we will be united with Christ in a resurrection like his. But what I wonder is a resurrection like his? His actual resurrection is hidden from view, a private moment known only to the Godhead. Jesus is dead, Jesus is laid in the tomb, Jesus' body is gone and he is resurrected. We don't know the process. We don't know what resurrection looks like.

Some people think that our physical bodies will be resuscitated. Others imagine that when we die our spirits soar free from our physical bodies as though they are finally liberated from an earthly prison. We tend to think of our spirit or soul as something divorced from our bodies, but this was not an idea that either Jesus or Paul would have understood. For them the spiritual was primary and expressed through the material, not somehow restless and impatient to be released.

From this perspective, especially if we think about God as the Being of the universe who gives life to all other beings (with a little b) then Jesus' resurrection is primarily a spiritual event because the physical world is always derived from the spiritual.

So did the resurrection really happen? Is it a factual event? We have no proof and will never have incontrovertible proof that Jesus resurrected. It is possible that his body was whisked away in the night and that it was not the factual but the mystical experience of his resurrection that animated and empowered the early church. In Luke's account, we are told that after they found the tomb empty, "Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them told [the news] to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened." (Luke 24:10-12)

They didn't know what had happened until they began to have experiences of Jesus among them. Experiences where Jesus came and left without using the doors. Perhaps the body in which Jesus rose was one that could only be perceived by their spiritual senses.

This makes sense if we imagine that the spiritual world is that which is real and that the material world is but a temporary physical manifestation. Jesus not only came through the walls, but he also came through the veil which up until then had held the spiritual hidden from our eyes.

When we see things in this way, everything we do and think is a manifestation of the spiritual. It is not as though our spiritual life is developing in tandem with our physical life but that the spiritual is taking form in and through us. Just as the daffodils push up through the soil and embody beauty, so the risen Christ pushes out through us to create beauty in the world.

So we are in a real way the embodiment of the risen Christ, which is a pretty awesome thought. You, my friend are an embodiment of the risen Christ.

I know some of you are saying “Really??” I can almost hear it from here... “Really?? You may be but I am certainly not.”

Of course we are still operating in the physical world which is temporary. Daffodils grow, they flower and they die. The life force seems to ebb and flow. There are days and seasons in our lives when it almost seems that resurrection is pushing us forward, creativity is high and we are in the flow... then there are others when it feels like we are pushing through heavy mud.

We can hone our ability to see and experience the Risen Christ in our world, to know the resurrection in our daily lives. We do this through spiritual practice. We do it by noticing the God moments, the moments when beauty happens, when a miracle occurs however small, when the sun breaks through the marine layer. We do it by sharing and talking with others.

I am so privileged to have this leadership role among you. Because I get to have conversations every week at the early service, in Morning prayer, Spiritual Conversation and Vespers every Tuesday as well as when I write sermons or articles and in informal times of sharing. I get to think about God and to hear how you experience God and how you understand the scriptures, or don't understand them. These things enrich my life and make it much easier for me to shift my perception and see that it is the inner life which is real, and that our privilege and our responsibility is to manifest it in the every day challenges of living and loving.

I wonder how you do that. How do you hone your spiritual perception? How do you notice the resurrection pulsing in your life?

Because if Paul is right, and we died in Christ and we are raised in a resurrection which is like Christ's then resurrection is here and now. It's not something that happens one day when the trumpet sounds, or even when we arrive in Paradise. Resurrection is not the afterlife. Resurrection is the living, risen Christ manifesting in me, manifesting in you, manifesting in us.

For, people of God, we are called to be the Body of Christ – not just the body broken for the world but the resurrection Body showing and sharing God's love in our attitudes, our core values and yes our actions. As Paul says, we get to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!