**What the Resurrection Means on Thursday**

* More to Resurrection than celebrating Jesus is alive 1day/yr
* What does it mean in everyday life? Thursday – ordinary day.

Resurrection:

* Helps us see what God has done for us in Christ
* Helps us make sense of life now – what if life all about
* Helps us understand the future

A lot in 30mins – hold on!

Read Col 3:1-4 again

Past – present - future

**The Resurrection of Jesus...**

**...Reminds us of what God has done for us (v1a)**

**Col 3:1** Since, then, you have been raised with Christ...

All know about Jesus Christ being “raised”. How was he “raised”?

* From the dead. He was dead – beaten, flogged, nailed hand and foot, spear – dead.
* Death could not hold him – power over death – raised to life, conquering death, hell, Satan, demons and all evil.

“You have been raised with Christ” – what does that mean?

* If you’re a Christian – mysterious – united to Christ – joined. He died – part of us died too – old life. **Gal 2:20** I have been crucified with Christ.
* Just as he was raised to life – united to him – new life come to us too. Old life died – new life started. **2Cor 5:17** If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!
* Jesus’ resurrection reminds us - being a Christian is all about an old life dying and a new life beginning. Jesus himself said it was like being born again.
  + Old man, religious leader came to Jesus one night – afraid of what his mates would say. Jesus – want God to come and be with you – “see the Kingdom of God” – must be born again. Old life die – new life start. “But I’m old – how can I start again?” – only way – you must be born again.

What does it mean for the old life to die? Not talking about our bodies. Wouldn’t be many Christians around if you immediately died on the spot! What dies exactly, so that this new life can begin?

* All the sin – all the desires in us that are bad, and dark and wrong. All the stuff that God hates – pride, selfishness, self-obsession, greed. That’s what must die.
* But, you say, I’m a Christian, and I still struggle with all that stuff. You’re saying it died. Feels pretty alive to me!
  + I have an ash tree in my front garden[[1]](#endnote-1). Being trying to kill it for years. Ugly spindly thing. Competing with the lovely cherry tree and magnolia tree. Every year, cut off the branches. Always grow back. Once, cut off all the branches, leaving the trunk. 2 years later – grown back. What do I need to do? Kill the roots. Kill the roots, the branches and leaves will eventually die too.
  + Same with us. All sorts of bad things in our lives. You can try and do something about it without Christ. You can cut out a few of them – try to be less selfish, be nicer to the neighbours – change a few things. But if you really look at yourself honestly – sin just crops up somewhere else. Grows back. Like pulling leaves off a tree.
  + What really needs to happen is to kill the root. Kill the root of sin – old life must die. Only Jesus can do that. Xn – old life dies. Root killed. Slowly, the branches and leaves will die too. Takes a while. Not overnight. But it will happen because the root is dead.
* Killing that root – the old life dying – can’t be done on your own. Look carefully at v1. “You have been raised”. Not, “you raised yourself with Christ”. You *have been* raised – God did it. Only in his power – only he can kill the old life and generate new life in someone.

Question: do you have that new life? Have you been “born again”? Can do that today.

*Pray: Helpless and hopeless without you. Can’t heal ourselves. Can’t kill our own sin – can’t bring ourselves back to life. Xn: help us remember it’s all your work in us. Non-Xn: come to Christ.*

**The Resurrection of Jesus...**

**...fixes our minds on the risen Christ (v1b-2)**

Sounds really spiritual – it is – but don’t worry – practical too.

“*Since* you have been raised with Christ” – linked to previous - therefore...

“set your hearts on things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God”

This is our response to what God has done for us – new life – this is what I do in response.

Notice it’s a response. Anything we do is always in response to what God has already done.

* Not, “Set your hearts on things above – then you’ll be raised with Christ and have a new life.” Do lots of good things and God will be impressed and forgive you and be your friend.
* No! He raised you – he brought you to life – he made you born again – he gave the life – now you respond to it. Now you love him. Because he loved you first. Always that way round.

What does it mean to “set your hearts on things above where Christ is”

* Technical – NIV comma in the wrong place. Focus is on Christ. Not asking us to vaguely fix our hearts on heaven, but specifically on Jesus.
* It’s something we must do. Imperative. lit. “seek the things above” Not an optional extra in the Christian life. Part of it. Must do this in response to what God has done for you. If he has raised you, you will want to do this.
* An act of the mind/will. “Set your minds on things above” “Seek the things above” – What does that mean? Be heavenly-minded.

Phrase: *He was so heavenly minded he was of no earthly use.* Rubbish.

* Never met anyone like that. Never met someone who ponders spiritual things – thinks about God and heaven so much that they ignore the world around them. Exact opposite of Christianity.
* Met plenty of people who are so worldly-minded they are of no worldly use.
  + Facebook-minded
  + TV-minded – can name every contestant on X-Factor, but not their neighbours.
  + Computer-games minded
  + Career-minded
  + Family-minded.
  + BF/GF/Spouse-minded
  + Self-minded
  + We can so fill our heads with all sorts of things that we will do very little good to the world around us.

I hope we are heavenly-minded people. Because heavenly-minded people make a difference in our world. In the past - formed almost every major charity you can think of because their faith in God motivated them to help the world around them.

* Age UK (Help the Aged) – founded by Cecil Jackson Cole, devout evangelical Christian in 1961[[2]](#endnote-2). Also OXFAM in 1942
* Save the Children[[3]](#endnote-3) - two Quaker sisters
* Red Cross – Swiss-born Christian businessman[[4]](#endnote-4)
* RSPCA - founded by William Wilberforce (anti-slavery), a Catholic MP and a CofE vicar[[5]](#endnote-5).
* Banardos, YMCA – all founded by Christians. Along with all the old hospitals, schools, universities.

I hope that we, as heavenly-minded people – minds fixed on Christ – do everything we do for the glory of God.

* CYG to the glory of God – because of what he has done for us. Ladies’ evening group / Tuesday Tots / GB / Coffee morning / phone calls, emails, cards.

Practical – how can we “set our minds on things above”?

* Be in church – receive spiritual food. You’re all here – preaching to the converted really! Concerns me that some Christians seem to think they can manage without hearing the Bible taught and explained. Only here when on a rota?
* Read Bible at home – plans, thought for the day – easy, more advanced.
* Memorise the Bible. Best thing I ever did as a Xn.
* Pray with others. On own, but better with others. Learn / be encouraged.
* Listen to sermons during the week. So much online. Ask if you need help choosing. Doing washing up/ironing. Automatically put the TV on as the default?
* Christian music – so much!
* Read books – biographies – struggling with something – ask someone what the best Xn book they’ve read recently.
* Baptism & Communion

Easy? No – I struggle with this. Mind training – “set your minds on things above”

**Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

Baptism – 16 – present afterwards. Really wanted a Discman. Opened excitedly – what better way to commemorate it? Bible. Col 3:1. Only occurred to me this week that back then I struggled with this. My heart was set on a Discman, not on things above. And today, it’s quite often set on earthly things too. Hard.

*Pray: Minds wander – so easily attracted by little things, shiny things, unimportant things. Help us see you as you truly are – ultimately glorious and utterly lovely – that nothing else can compare. May we turn our eyes towards Jesus – everything else strangely dim.*

3rd thing – some encouragement.

**The Resurrection of Jesus...**

**...gives us a future hope (v3,4)**

Keeping your eyes fixed on Christ is hard – willpower – mind training. This is why:

**Colossians 3:3-4** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

“For...” – because... this is why we’re going to do all those things – motivation:

OK, your new life is mostly hidden isn’t it? Xns don’t have halos, glowing hearts or shining faces. Look pretty much the same as everyone else. Maybe worse dress sense. Can’t tell just by looking. Why? The new resurrection life you have in Jesus is hidden.

Two quick encouragements:

**It’s hidden “with Christ in God”** – that’s pretty secure isn’t it?

* Maybe you think, well I’m such a rubbish Christian. I have no willpower, not very good at training my mind. This new life I have in Christ - sometimes I just wish it would burn a bit brighter – shine a little stronger. Your life verse is “Lord I believe – help my unbelief!”[[6]](#endnote-6)
* Your life is hidden with Christ in God. United to Christ – he has done that, not you. He won’t let you go. The life you have is secure in Christ.
  + You want to protect something – put it in a safe. Then put that safe in a vault.
  + Your life is hidden with Christ, in God. 2 layers of protection there! He will never let go of your hand. No-one can take away your life in Christ. Secure.
    - /Feelings
    - **Romans 10:9** That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Second encouragement: Jesus is coming back.**

* One day your new life will burst into fruition – the frustrations and heartbreak and longing and loss of this life will be over. When? “When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (v4) – Jesus is coming back. Glorious new life he’s given us will be seen by everyone. We will appear with him in glory.
  + New life – had hints of it – kept safe & secure until this time when he returns – now the fullness.

Last thing: Seen all the way through – all about Jesus:

* Raised with Christ (v1a)
* Set your hearts on things above where Christ is (v1b)
* New life is secure in Christ (v3)
* Glory revealed when Christ returns (v4)

All about him. He is the absolute focus of our faith.

* Resurrection – what he has done for us in the past
* Focus for now – on Jesus
* Certain hope for the future

Nothing else compares. Everything else is worth giving up to have more of him.

*Pray: Thank you that the life we have in you is secure forever. In spite of our feelings, fears, insecurities – you are strong and trustworthy. Thank you that one day soon Jesus is coming back – and the hints and tastes of glory we have had on earth will be as nothing compared to what you have in store for your people. Lord we love you – help us to love you more – and see you as magnificent.*

*Close: All I Have is Christ.*

*Whitton 27th April 2014 AM*

1. This is true, but it’s inspired by an illustration by John Owen (no less)! John Owen, Communion with the Triune God. Crossway. p207 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <http://the-history-girls.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/cecil-jackson-cole-grand-father-of.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.leader-values.com/leaders.php?lid=1> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1801-1900/christian-businessman-founded-the-red-cross-11630533.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://animalsmattertogod.com/category/rspca-history/> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Mark 9:24 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)