

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

Scripture says our heavenly bodies will be exactly like the one Jesus had following His resurrection. We know He resembled Himself, because His disciples could recognise Him. He could be touched... He could miraculously pass through walls – He could appear in various places to a variety of people without travelling by any recognised means. His transformed body no longer aged, nor was it subject to sickness and death. And... we are given the promise that our new bodies will be like His.

“Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when He comes back. After that the end will come”. (1 Corinthians 15: 23-24)

In 1684, Scottish Presbyterian Robert Baillie learned that he would be hanged for his alleged involvement in a plot to assassinate King Charles II, then drawn and quartered, and his head and hands nailed to a local bridge. How did he respond?

By first quoting this Scripture: “Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour... who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body”. (Philippians 3: 20-21) Then he declared: “They may hack and hew my body as they please, but I know assuredly that nothing will be lost, that all these members shall be wonderfully gathered and made like Christ’s glorious body”. The truth is that whether we get buried or cremated, makes no difference eternally – God has prepared for us a glorious body just like Christ’s.

It could be argued, however, that the greatest proof of Christ’s resurrection isn’t in transformed bodies... but is found in the transformed lives of people all over the world. The songwriter put it like this: “You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my HEART”.

So... what does that involve for those of us who claim to be His followers? It could be said that some Christians would rather debate doctrine than do what Jesus says, but our ability to recite the Ten Commandments is considerably less impressive to Him than our ability to keep them. So, this Easter, as evidence of our transformed hearts and lives, perhaps we could practise... loving a difficult person; forgiving someone, giving some money away, remembering to stop and say the simple but powerful words, “Thank you”, worshipping God, encouraging a friend, blessing an enemy, when we’re in the wrong, saying “sorry”... the list is endless.

In one of His final appearances recorded in the book of Revelation, Jesus announced: *“I am He that liveth, and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore.... Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die”*. (Revelation 1:18; John 11:26).

Today Christ stands knocking at the door of our hearts, saying, “If any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in.” (Revelation 3:20).

Unless we know Christ personally as our Saviour, we live without real hope in this world and in the world to come. So today, let’s place our complete trust in the One who died and rose again for us... in the One who said, *“Those who do not forget self, take up their cross, and follow in my steps are not fit to be My disciples.”*