

Weekly Newsletter: 29th August 2022

Reflection: Is It Okay to Daydream about the Day of Resurrection?

By Joe Barnard

I've noticed something as a pastor. A lot of Christians are reluctant to allow themselves any imaginative space to daydream about the day of resurrection. For some, this reluctance is due to the impossibility of doing justice to future truths that do indeed exceed the childish reach of the mind. Paul himself says, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, or have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Cor. 2:9). Likewise, John says, 'It has not yet been revealed what we shall be' (1 Jn. 3:2). Thus, some Christians seem to feel as if imaginative restraint regarding topics like the new creation and resurrected bodies is a matter of piety. To speculate about what is unknown is like an ancient Israelite trying to peer beyond the curtains of the tabernacle. Rather than indulge our curiosity, we ought to be willing to trust God and wait for Him to open the blinds when He is ready. So the argument runs.

This all sounds good in theory, and yet it leaves Christians in a predicament. For creatures like us- creatures who find joy in no small part through our senses- it is exceedingly difficult to desire what we cannot imagine. If eternal life is left entirely in the haze of mystery, we should not be surprised if there is something in us that clings to the present world like roots stuck in the ground. To some extent, it is only as we begin to catch glimpses of the surpassing goodness of the coming world that our tight grip on this one begins to loosen. Thus, rather than keeping our imaginations in a dark cage, we ought to do something different. Relying on the information given in the Scriptures, we ought to allow ourselves a little leeway to daydream about the wonderful surprises that God has in store on the day of resurrection.

Daydreaming about the New Heavens and the New Earth

It's important to know that God's covenant is not restricted to humankind. From Genesis 1-3 to Isaiah 24-26 to Romans 8, God reiterates the point that his final act of salvation will be cosmic in proportions. This is what Paul means by saying that 'creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption' (Romans 8:21). When the King returns, he will not just awaken dead saints from the grave. Heaven and earth will erupt with glory that will make Eden look drab and barren.

This means that, when we daydream about eternal life, we should not limit our thoughts to blinking at bright lights and listening to harp music. Rather we need to imagine trees, animals, rivers, and sunsets that are worthy of angelic choruses. The good things of this world will not be binned and forgotten; they will be refurbished and perfected in the life to come.

Daydreaming about Imperishable Bodies

Perhaps due to our hymnody, a lot of Christians seem to think that eternal life is a matter of human beings graduating into the ranks of disembodied spirits. Like the Corinthian church in the first century, we seem to be perturbed by the thought that eternal life might involve something physical (or super-physical).

This is unfortunate. So much of the joy of our present life is experienced in and through our physical existence. Unlike us, the Bible is unembarrassed by this fact. In Isaiah 25, God promises to make for all peoples 'a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees' (vs. 6). Along similar lines, Jesus speaks of a day when he will drink again of the cup with his people (c.f. Luke 22:18). In view of such promises, when we think of resurrected life, we should not imagine that everything sensory will be left behind. Rather, in line with the idea of new creation, we should expect that the joys of having a body in this life are a mere appetizer to a main meal that God has yet to serve.

Such thoughts can be a source of consolation to Christians suffering the debilitating effects of age and illness. Do we long for the days when we could run and skip like children? Such longing should not be directed backwards in nostalgia but forwards in hope. There is a day when God will give us imperishable bodies of glory and power, bodies of such stature and strength that – if Olympic athletes could see them now – they would sit silent in envy.

Daydreaming about an Eternal Fountain of Surprises

There are no more exciting words in the Bible than these: 'Behold, I will do a new thing' (Is. 43:19). None of us can outthink God. His creativity is as limitless as His power. Thus, as children of God, we need to feel as if we are on the eve of a cosmic Christmas morning. The trees that we see in this world are but stick-figures of what God can do with the class, 'tree'. The mountains and hills of the Western Highlands are just the wet clay of the better sculptures that God will one day cast. Are we amazed at sunsets in this world? Brothers and sisters, these are just primary colours of fiery skies yet to be painted.

This Sunday – Jon Gemmell preaching

Joe is speaking at a men's weekend this Friday (2nd) until Sunday (4th September) in Pitlochry. We're very grateful to Jon Gemmell for preaching when Joe's away. Jon will also take our Equip session on Sunday evening at 6pm on *Lessons from the life of Isaac Watts*

There will be no communion this Sunday and our next communion service will be on Sunday 2nd October.

Montgomery Street Park



The Park Committee have organised for a mural to be painted on the substation in the park by artists from Colony of Artists and Vue, Ltd. This will take place on Saturday 3rd September.

The Committee have asked if the church would be able to serve tea and coffee to the artists and any passers-by. Please speak to Liz if you would be able to help with this.

Autumn Term

Home Groups will restart in September for the autumn term and will meet on 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. The first home group will be Sunday 11th September and your Home Group leader will be in touch about where and when you'll be meeting. If you're not in a Home Group and would like to be, please contact Murdo Macleod or Liz Scott.

We'll continue to have Equip Sessions in the church building at 6pm on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

Bible Class is back on this Sunday after the morning service for all secondary school aged children.

Church Barbecue – Saturday 10th September

Our annual church barbecue will be on Saturday 10th September at the Newlands Centre in Romanno Bridge, Peeblesshire, EH46 7BZ. We've booked the Centre from 11.30am until 4.30pm. Please can you complete this form to help us with our planning- <https://forms.gle/hoajFYKbjTmi5Vok9>

We'd be grateful if all responses could be in by this Thursday (1st September). Thank you!

Ladies' Breakfast – Saturday 5th November



Save the date! We're excited to draw all the ladies in the church together for a time of fellowship, teaching and prayer on Saturday 5th November from 9.30-11am.

We're hoping to have these once a term and Norma Shippin will be our first speaker. We'll also have a testimony, book review, time to pray and our breakfast together.

Speak to Anna Barnard or Liz Scott if you have any questions.

Welcome to Holyrood!

It's wonderful to see new faces at church on Sunday mornings. On Sunday 11th and Sunday 18th September, Joe will be holding a short session after the morning service in the hall downstairs to welcome any newcomers and provide them with information about the church. Please share this information with anyone you know who has recently started attending.

Men's Discipleship this Autumn

Save the date! Joe is running a Men's Discipleship Group for eight weeks from Thursday 15th September. Meet at 10.30am in the church and coffee will be provided. Joe will be using hymns as the basis of the discussion.

Eilah Simpson

We rejoice with Les, Margaret and the family at the safe arrival of Eilah Margaret Irene Simpson (sounds like Isla!). She was born on Thursday 25th August and weighed 6lbs 9oz.

We're so thankful to God for this new addition to the Simpson clan and the family are so grateful for all our prayers.



Joint Youth Event



The Holyrood Bible Class enjoyed spending yesterday evening on Portobello beach with young people from Grace Church Leith and Christ Church. They had a barbecue, played some games and roasted marshmallows! Joe spoke to them about their goals for this year and challenged them to grow in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). Pray that this would be the case for each young person who was there.

Liz's Admin Hours

Liz will be doing her admin hours for the church four mornings a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday). She plans to be in the church building on Monday and Thursday mornings during term time. Feel free to email or text her outside of these times and she'll reply the following day or two.

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday:
 - Baby and Toddler Group at 10am
 - Youth Discipleship Team Meeting at 7.30pm on Zoom
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting on Zoom at 7pm
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Jon Gemmell preaching. Please contact Liz by 12 noon on Thursday if you would like a socially distant seat.
 - Equip at 6pm with Jon Gemmell - *Lessons from the life of Isaac Watts*



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