

## **Children of the Resurrection, Pentecost 22, Year C**

Job 19:23-27a, 1 Peter 1:3-9, Luke 20:27-38

In 1972 the band T. Rex had a song in the charts 'Children of the Revolution'. Actually, it doesn't make a lot of sense. But even if we've never heard the song, or never listened to the words, we all have a concept of what type of people are meant by the "children of the revolution" don't we? At very least they want change, to revolutionise the world.

In our Gospel reading Jesus says that we are *children of the resurrection*. And that too should immediately convey what sort of people we are. But does it? What does being a child of the resurrection mean to you a Christian? Much, or little? What does it mean for us together to be children of the resurrection?

Well, it means that for us as Christians resurrection is our milieu; it is what we are born into. We are resurrection people. We are birthed in resurrection. As we heard, Peter wrote that God *has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. It is his resurrection that gives us the possibility of a new birth, the opportunity to be *children of the resurrection*.

We are birthed into new life in Christ through his resurrection.

But what does this new birth mean in practice? What does being children of the resurrection mean? I'm going to consider three things this morning.

1. We have a new destiny
2. We have a new citizenship
3. We have a new nature

### **Destiny**

Being children of the resurrection impacts on our destiny. We shall be resurrected too - such a relevant thought for All Souls' Day.

Now I have a friend who was part of the ladies' lunch and discussion group I used to organise. One day we were discussing whether we believed in life after death, and it turned out that Caroline – who goes to church every week – believes that God is just a big cloud of love and that after death we will be disembodied spirits floating about in this cloud. The mind boggles!

I don't know where she got this idea. It is certainly not biblical. As we heard, way before Jesus, the author of the book of Job wrote *I know that my redeemer lives, ... And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes*.

And I'm sure you know that verse from John's gospel (14:2) so often read at funerals, *In my Father's house...*

*In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.* Disembodied spirits do not need mansions!

Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 15:35) *Someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" How foolish!*

We can get bogged down, if we are not careful, in fruitless wonderings over what it means to have bodies in heaven or to be like the angels and all the many other questions that occur from the vague snippets of information that we read in the bible.

For Paul it is simply that we will still have bodies, just different, spiritual bodies rather than earthly bodies, 1 Corinthians 15:48-49.

*As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.*

John (1 John 3:2) says something similar: *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* This is almost certainly the same John who met the resurrected Jesus 'in the flesh' as it were, Jesus who could be touched, who made the disciples breakfast and ate with them. John knew what he was talking about.

Our destiny in Christ is to inhabit heaven with a body like Jesus's, the salvation of our souls, *an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.*

So, if we belong in heaven we also have a new citizenship.

### **Citizenship**

My daughter Melanie lives in Switzerland. She speaks French, is a naturalised Swiss citizen and so is allowed to participate in every aspect of Swiss life. But nevertheless, she is still a UK citizen. She speaks English, reads a British newspaper, and prays for Rishi Sunak. But one of her citizenships takes precedence over the other, and it's not the one with which she started. Melanie always uses her Swiss passport.

Similarly, we Christians have dual citizenship. We are citizens of another place. *Our citizenship is in heaven* Paul wrote (Philippians 3:20). And it should take precedence. It should affect our world-view, how we see ourselves. *This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through* as the old hymn says. Do we see ourselves in this way, or do we get so caught up in our citizenship in the world that it slips from our consciousness?

We children of the resurrection are already citizens of heaven and so we should be behaving as such. Paul wrote (Romans 12:2a) *Do not conform to the pattern of*

*this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Our world view, how we think, where we are focussed, will determine the pattern of our living.

What is in our minds? What is the pattern to which we conform? It can be influenced, even determined, by how we engage with things like TV, YouTube, TikTok, etc., who we blether with, what we read in books, in the newspaper, on the internet, on social media. Things that can have the power to reinforce our Christian worldview or distort it even things not bad in themselves.

## **Nature**

So, we children of the resurrection have a new destiny and a new citizenship. And, fundamentally, we also have a new nature, a new DNA. Resurrection life changes us; *the old has passed away, the new has come.*

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

We are re-created by the Spirit of Christ within us. This DNA should drive our thinking and our actions, although we can choose, maybe subconsciously, for it not to do so. But if we let it, if we encourage it, it will increasingly produce in us the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control* as we inhabit our new DNA and walk in the Spirit.

I said at the beginning that the song 'Children of the Revolution' doesn't make a lot of sense. And in a way it doesn't.

But it is quite possibly spotlighting the inconsistency of those whose lifestyle is at odds with the revolutionary ideas that they espouse.

I wonder, could an equivalent song be written about us 'Children of the Resurrection' spotlighting inconsistency between our lives and the resurrection life portrayed in the bible? I hope not. I hope that we live true to being children of the resurrection.

So, as we recognise All Souls' Day today let us thank God that those who have gone before us are themselves children of the resurrection and let us determine that we will think and live as children of the resurrection honouring our new destiny, new citizenship and new nature. Amen

Chris Shaw, 6 November 2022