**Special Presentation**

Various Scriptures

The Rev. Ted Wood

April 5, 2024

 **Ted:** When I pray I always feel inadequate. So I’ve chosen three prayers out of *The Book of Common Prayer* that I’m going to read for us, and we can pray together. The Lord be with you.

 **Brave Men:** And also with you.

 **Ted:** Let us pray. *“Heavenly Father, Sustainer of our life and Source of our hope, comfort and relieve all those who endure terminal illness,”* especially Tab. *“Give Your grace to all who minister”* to her needs, *“that t she may be strengthened in all her weakness, and have confidence in Your loving care, through Him who knows our weakness and has shared our sorrows—Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

 *“Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we hold up all our weaknesses to Your strength, our failure to Your faithfulness, our sinfulness to Your perfection, our loneliness to Your compassion, our little pains to Your great agony on the cross. We pray that You will cleanse us, strengthen us, guide us, so that in all ways our life may be lived as You would have it lived, without cowardice and for You alone. Show us how to live in true humility, true contrition and true love. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*

 *“Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scripture to be written for our learning, grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by the patience and comfort of Your holy word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which You have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.”*

 Okay. I may have told this story. But Tabatha would go up every several months to Erie to get an injection in her eye. She had diabetic retinopathy. She suffered bad diabetes as well. So to maintain her sight she would go up to Erie to the clinic there. And I don’t know why she did that rather than locally and have a shot. They would inject something into her eye. I don’t know how they do that; they stick a needle into your eye. I guess it doesn’t hurt; I guess there aren’t nerve endings in the eye there.

 And then I would always have lunch with them afterward because I had a client who was just a block or two away from downtown, and the clinic was downtown. Have I told this story?

 **Don Bishop:** No.

 **Ted:** And so it was a great time to be with Jeff and Tabatha, just talking and having a really good lunch in an Irish restaurant there on the main drag in Erie. And that first time we met poor Tabatha was sitting next to me, and Jeff was talking to me—Bible, theology, church history,--and I’m looking over to her. “Tabatha, join in any time you want.”

 Well she’s like my wife, you know? She loves to listen to K-Love and to praise the Lord. But she doesn’t care anything about any of this stuff.

 So the second time that happened that we went out to lunch, he started in. And I looked at him and I said, “Jeff, we’re not going to talk at all about Bible, theology or church history today. We’re gonna talk about what Tabatha wants to talk about.” So we ended up talking about family and friends and church life and things of that sort. It was good. Tabatha is a real trooper.

 Okay. Well today there’s a group of us—let me think: Mike and Jordan and Roger and Don—when he’s about—are going to be teaching on a Psalm; they have each chosen a Psalm to teach on. Because I just picked up this email from Jeff on Wednesday I pulled this out and I did not do a Psalm. I took the easy way out; I pulled the lesson that I taught in Adult Ed at our church last week, which is on the resurrection of the dead. And I’m sorry; Michael Rush is also teaching us as well He’[s going to do the jazz version of Psalm 23. *(Laughter)*

 Okay, the resurrection from the dead; Jesus’ resurrection and our resurrection. And I have been thinking about this for a while. And you may not like some of the things I have to share, and you may disagree. And that’s great, but let’s look at what the Scriptures have to say. If you find that you’re in dispute with me and my teaching—and I’ve laid it all out there; it’s always packed—as you know, my outlines are always packed. That outline is two pages long; my notes are six pages long. But that’s okay; we’re going to get through it.

 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. And some of the Scriptures here I’m going to quote, more than what you have on the sheet.

 *“If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.”*

 That’s an extraordinary statement: to say that our faith is in vain; it’s empty without the resurrection from the dead. And that got me thinking, because often in churches we hear a lot of sermons and teaching on the Atonement—that is Jesus dying for our sins, going up on the cross. We got heavy dosages of that for Good Friday and even into Easter.

 I listened to sermons from several other churches, and that was a great component of it.

 But I don’t think any place in Scripture says that if we do not believe in the Atonement that our faith is in vain; our faith is empty. I just think that’s very interesting. And it has made me think, and I began to ask myself the question several years ago: What were the apostles preaching in Acts? There are about fifteen sermons in Acts; some of them are only a sentence long.

 But I came to the conclusion that the resurrection from the dead is one of the key teaching elements in any sermon in the early church. There is a necessary witness. The Greek word is *marturos.* We get our word *martyr* from that. So the necessary witness—the *marturos*—to Jesus and His believability comes from the resurrection of the dead.

 **Transcriber’s Note:** Ted’s phone rings.

 **Ted:** Sorry; it’s a client. *(Laughter)* You know, here’s one of the issues. One of the great things about dying is that you don’t have to learn how to mess with this kind of stuff anymore. *(Laughter)* I’ve refused to get involved in it.

 In any case, remember when Peter in the first chapter of Acts was leading the selection of the twelfth apostle because Judas had fallen away and they needed to have a twelfth apostle. He says, *“These must become with us a witness to His resurrection.”* The only necessary requirement is that they had been with Jesus through His ministry and a witness to His resurrection; hence the absolute importance of His resurrection. They weren’t requiring a statement of faith. But they were requiring that that person—who ended up being Matthias—would be a witness to the resurrection. Yes, John?

 **John Gratner:** That is the statement of faith.

 **Ted:** It is the statement of faith; right. Yes, that is the statement of faith. And I think that sometimes we miss that.

 **John:** Prior to the Resurrection, prior to His death, remember He said that *“It is finished”* while He was still alive. We can get into that later. You didn’t have to believe that He would be raised from the dead before He died. But you did have to believe that He was raised from the dead after He died, or else you didn’t believe Him.

 **Ted:** Yeah, beautiful.

 **John:** The witness of the Resurrection is the statement of faith.

 **Ted:** Right. The believability of the gospel begins with and is built on the eyewitnesses. It’s not built on feelings, experiences, dogma, doctrine, philosophy, morality, ethics, rituals mythologies or legends. Our faith is not built on any of those, as important as some of them are.

 The first generation of Christians witnessed that they saw, talked to, handled, ate with Jesus, who was certifiably dead on Friday and very much alive on Monday.

 I remember a number of years ago that I was on a business flight. And there was a fellow; I think he was Japanese, a Japanese businessman I was sitting next to on the flight. And we got into a conversation and I asked him if he knew very much about Christianity. And he said, “Not really.”

 So I began to talk to him about it, and he was going, “Uh-huh, uh-huh.” And then I got to this. Jesus was put to death. And then on the third day He rose again; He came alive again. And that man looked at me and he said, “What did you say?”

 And I said, “Well on the third day after He was dead He came to life again. He was alive and He is alive forevermore.”

 And that man could not put his head around that. I mean, it was good up to that point. But it became unbelievable for him at the mention of the Resurrection.

 Today our confidence in the Resurrection doesn’t come from wishful thinking, but from confidence in the written testimony of the eyewitnesses. The constant drumbeat throughout the New Testament is that what you have seen, go tell. That’s the message.

 So this is just an absolutely critical doctrine and teaching, the eyewitness that is often overlooked. And we see this again and again in the Gospels.

 Matthew 28:5-8: *“The angel said, ‘You are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; He is risen. Then go quickly and tell His disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the women ran to tell His disciples.”* What you have seen, go tell. Not what you have believed go tell, but what you’ve seen, go tell.

 John 20:18: *“Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news. ‘I have seen the Lord!’”* Luke 24:33: the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. *“And they came back and they found the eleven apostles and those with them assembled together, saying, ‘It is true. The Lord is risen.’”* John 20:25; I don’t think you have it there. *“The other disciples told Thomas, ‘We have seen the Lord!’”*

 Acts 1:21-22 as I read before; Peter to the apostles. *“Choose one who must become a witness with us to the Resurrection.”* And then Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 15:4-8 Paul wrote that *“Jesus was raised and that He appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. And after that He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living. … Then He appeared to James and to all the apostles. And last of all He appeared to me.”*

 It’s interesting to me that in this there are three verses in that section. *“I handed on to you of first importance what I also received.”* In that there are three verses. The first three verses deal with Jesus dying for our sins, #2 that He was buried, #3 that He was raised from the dead. And then the next four verses do nothing but talk about the Resurrection. So while it’s important that He died for our sins, and it’s important that He was buried; (he was really dead), the great emphasis there is put on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

 But the problem with the Resurrection is that it’s very difficult to get our arms wrapped around it, because it is presented to us as a mystery which is an essential. Now what I mean is this. It’s very easy for me to understand that I’ve done these sins. I’m due God’s wrath; I have a debt to pay, and Jesus paid that debt. It’s almost like an accounting; it’s like bookkeeping. I’ve done this bad thing. And these are the good things that Jesus has done and puts to my account. I can understand that; I grasp that. And that’s probably why we talk about it more often than the Resurrection.

 But the Resurrection becomes almost unbelievable. Well, actually it is unbelievable. And it’s very hard to put our arms around it, as I say. But Paul starts off in 1 Corinthians 15:51: *“Behold, I tell you a mystery.”* It’s a mystery. *“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. … For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”*

 So the Resurrection in my mind is almost a different category of teaching because, as I said, I can get the Atonement, and that’s easy to explain. But to sit there and say, as I did to the Japanese businessman, that He was raised from the dead; He came back to life, it was “What did you just say?”

 I had another experience like that. We were eating at the Taj Mahal, the great Indian restaurant on McKnight Road. You have to go there. Do any of you like Indian food? You don’t like Indian food. Oh, that’s wonderful! *(Laughter)*

 **Brave Man:** Curry.

 **Ted:** Yeah, right. *(Laughter)* But I noticed that the owners of the place were an older Indian couple that owned the place. He was a lawyer and his wife had been a lawyer in India, and they had come to this country, and they set up a business like a lot of the Indian immigrants; either that or being a doctor. That’s a stereotype, isn’t it? So you can report that to the political correctness crew. *(Laughter)*

 But there is one of the young ladies there who kind of manages it now. And I asked, “Where is the older fellow, the gentleman who owns this place?”

 “Oh, he died recently.” I knew he was in bad health. And she said, “He died.” Her name was Harjot. I said, “Harjot, you look pretty sad today.”

 And she said, “Yes; I was just at his funeral.”

 We got to talking about this. And she said, “Well, you know, nobody knows what happens after we die.”

 I said, “Well, Jesus did. And He died and He came back, and He came to tell us what life is about and life after death.”

 And she said, “But nobody knows for sure.” And I repeated, “Jesus does. He died, He came back.” I repeated it three times to her. She didn’t want to receive that, because it’s easier to kind of be in that “I don’t really believe much of that” than trying to commit yourself to something that’s unbelievable.

 **Mike Davis:** I don’t want to be responsible for knowing it.

 **Ted:** What was that?

 **Mike:** I don’t want to be responsible for knowing it.

 **Ted:** Of course it was not fair, because I’m the customer and she is at an immediate disadvantage. But I thought it went well. You know, it’s one of those things. You may not say it the first time you talk to people that you’re getting to know. But every time we come into the restaurant we always talk. “How are you doing, Harjot? Where are you living?” So we had this conversation. So I felt like I earned the right t3o speak to her about that boldly.

 And if I hadn’t spoken boldly, then what? Shame on me! What did Paul say? *“Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”*

 It’s proclaimed as a mystery. It’s delivered; it’s in the Scriptures. And as I said before, in 1 Corinthians 15 it’s things of first importance. Jesus died and He was buried. And then he spends the next four verses talking about it, who has seen it. It’s not just talking about a doctrine of the Resurrection; he’s actually listing the people who have seen it. It’s almost like he’s saying, “You know, if you don’t believe that Jesus rose from the dead, we’ve got some folks around who you can check. Check this story out; listen to them. What do you think?

 I mean, when I talk to people about the gospel, my youngest daughter brought over her newest love interest the other day for Easter dinner. You know, you always cross yourself and say your prayers in those situations. *(Laughter)* But he actually asked; I’ve never been asked this by any young person. He said, “Well how did you come to all this? When did you get religious?” So that gave me a chance to give my testimony. And he found the things about the faith—the truth of Jesus and who He is—he found them hard to take.

 And I said, “Well don’t take my word for it. You go look and see; read it yourself. See if what I’m saying is not true. You decide.”

 And at the end of the Easter dinner, as they were leaving, he said that he thanked me for not trying to convert him. Well, I was. *(Laughter)* But he didn’t perceive it that way. I was just sharing the good news.

 We affirm the Resurrection in the Apostles’ Creed. We say, “I believe.” And one of the things we believe is that on the third day Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And then we not only say that Jesus did it, but that I’m going to do it. *“I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.”* It’s repeated again in the Nicene Creed.

 So the church from the very earliest times has affirmed this. Interestingly enough, in those creeds they talk about Jesus dying. They talk about Jesus dying, but no reference to the Atonement. They just say that Jesus died. But they go into the Resurrection.

 The Resurrection becomes the central theme of much of the gospel preaching in Acts. That’s why I did a survey. I went through those fifteen sermons; some are much longer. But what were they talking about in these early sermons in the early church, compared to what we talk about today?

 Peter preaches on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:23. *“This Jesus you crucified and killed. God raised Him up, because it was not possible for Him to be held by death. … This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses.”*

 So in that very first sermon what is Peter talking about? He’s talking about “you guys killed Him”; original sin.

*“Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon Thee?*

*Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone Thee!*

*‘Twas I, Lord Jesus; I it was denied Thee.*

*I crucified Thee.”*

 “You crucified Him.” Luther says that “in every one of our pockets are the nails.” So “you are guilty,” and “God raised Him from the dead.” It’s repeated several times in that first sermon.

 And then the next sermon in the third chapter of Acts. I think I have them on the worksheet. Verses 12 and 15: *“Men of Israel, you killed the Author of life whom God raised from the dead. … To this we are witnesses.”* “You are guilty. God raised Him from the dead and we’re telling you it’s true. We saw it.”

 Peter is preaching to the Council in Acts 4:8. *“Rulers of the people and elders, let it be known to all of you that Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, God raised from the dead.”* I mean, again and again and again they’re not saying that Jesus died for your sins; accept Him as your Savior. All of those things are absolutely true and good; we need to do that. But the them is you’re guilty, and God raised Him from the dead.

 Then Peter again preaches to the Council in Acts 5:30 before the Jewish Council and the high priest. He preached that *“The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed. God exalted Him at His right hand as Leader and Savior, and we are witnesses of these things.”* So again and again and again the unchanged witness of the church for 2,000 years has been “we have seen the Lord.”

 But what about me? What about me and my resurrection and my afterlife? Any thoughts up to this point about that? I’m just trying to establish how critical this doctrine is, the teaching about the resurrection of the dead. And I have to teach it whether I can put my arms around it or not.

 As I said the Atonement—so many sins, so much blood—it’s clear. You go all the way back to Exodus in the Old Testament and it’s the same kind of thing. But the Resurrection is something that’s different, but absolutely necessary. Yes, please?

 **Roger Myers:** I think we need to contrast this versus the liberal theology of our day for sure, because whatever people say, it’s not Christianity. If you take the supernatural out of it, it’s not the same.

 **Ted:** Yes. I actually listened. I don’t know why I did this; I must be a glutton for punishment. I listened to several sermons, a couple of them from Episcopal cathedrals. Oh gosh, it was awful; it was just awful stuff! There was no hope in it at all; it was trite. You know, if we’re going to talk about something unbelievable, let’s be bold about it. If we want to talk about a mystery, say “Yeah, this is absolutely true.” Here’s the dividing line. there are those who believe that Jesus rose from the dead—and we’re going to talk about what that actually meant!—and those who think it’s something else!

 We’re witnesses today, two thousand years later, of that. But the early church made it a point of saying, “We saw it. If you don’t believe it, ask others.” And if you still don’t believe it, then come up with some kind of theory about mass hallucination, or whatever you want to come up with. “But we’ve actually seen Him.”

 You say that we see it in the liberal churches. But I also see it in a lot of evangelical churches which err on the side of not talking enough about this because it was such a huge theme. And that’s what I’m trying to establish in this first part.

 So therefore Jesus’ resurrection is absolutely essential. It’s a mystery, but it’s an absolute essential. And we are witnesses to that. We have to say that we believe the apostolic witness. We believe that the apostles truly believed what they actually saw, and the other eyewitnesses—five hundred, six hundred, seven hundred, however many there were—more and more. Unbelievable!

 But what about me? Remember, in the Creed it says that we believe in the resurrection of Jesus, yes; He rose from the dead. But we also believe in the resurrection from the dead. So there is Jesus’ resurrection and there is my resurrection and your resurrection.

 A Christian maxim, an absolutely true statement, is that because Jesus was raised I will be raised. We don’t just believe that Jesus did an amazing and mysterious, incomprehensible thing. It’s going to happen to me too. And it’s pointed to in the Old Testament, although not very clearly.

 We see a few references like Job 19:25: *“I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth.”* And then what you don’t have their I’m going to read. *“And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God, whom I shall see for myself and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”* So Job is saying—and this is in the midst of all his accusations of his detractors; they’re attacking Job!—and he’s saying, “Yes; all of what you say is true. Yet I know that my Redeemer lives, and that after my skin has been destroyed, yet shall I in my flesh see God.”

 I can imagine it. If you look at the whole Old Testament, this is kind of a rare statement. I mean, I wonder. Job, have you been smoking the wacky tobacky, or something like that? What are you talking about, Job? I mean, this is very strange.

 We get it again in Psalm 16, verses 5 and 10.

*“The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;*

*And You hold my lot.”*

 So you know, this is the identification with God. We know it as to be in Christ, union with Christ. My identification, Ted Wood’s total identification is that *“The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup, and You hold my lot.”* That’s who I am.

 Okay. If that’s true, and that *“in my flesh I will see God,”* according to Job.

*“For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol,*

(or the pit),

*“or let Your Holy One see corruption.”*

 And this is cited by Paul in Acts 13 when he talks about the resurrection of Jesus. So God says that I’m going to the place of the dead. But I’m not going to stay there. “You will not let my body see corruption.” That means my body will not decay. Yes, Gary?

 **Gary Craig:** I just wanted to say that I revisited the Psalm where it says that your form won’t see decay. It was much more important for Christ to be resurrected because of that verse and that prediction of the Messiah.

 **Ted:** Sure.

 **Gary:** He did not see decay.

 **Ted:** Right. That was a fulfillment.

 **Gary:** Yes.

 **Ted:** Now we could go into all the fulfillments. That’s not what I’m hitting at today. I’m hitting on the whole idea of the resurrection. Now you might see glimpses of it in the Old Testament, and then it becomes full-blown and explicit in the New Testament, and in the working out of life in Christ or union with Christ. The reason I’m resurrected is because I’m in union or am one with Christ. I already am, by nature of what He has done for me.

 Romans 6:5: *“If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.”* So that’s the promise. If we’ve died with Him we will also be resurrected with Him.

 Philippians 3:10-11; I don’t think you have those verses there, but they’re noted. Paul says: *“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, that by any means possible I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.”* So this is kind of my life’s verse: *“I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, so that in some way I may become a partaker, or may attain to the resurrection of the dead.”*

 Colossians 3:1 ff.: *“If then you have been united with Christ,”*—I have; I’ve been united with Christ; that’s my identity. And everything that Christ gave and did and lived is in me. I’ve received all the riches in the heavenly places.

 *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”* So I’ve been raised with Christ. Therefore my eyes have to be set on the heavenly things rather than the earthly things. *“Set your mind on things that are above and not on things that are on earth. For you have died,.”* When I am put in union with Christ I’ve died. *“And your life is hidden with Christ in God.”*

 My life is not here with you guys this morning. The fullness of my life is hidden with God in Christ; that’s where my life is.

 **Michael Rush:** Amen.

 **Ted:** *“When Christ who is your life appears.”* What does that mean? *“When Christ who is your life appears.”* When is that going to happen?

 **Don Bishop:** When He comes.

 **Mike Davis:** At the Second Coming.

 **Ted:** Right: in the resurrection of the dead. *“Then you will also appear with Him in glory.”*

 My life right now on this earth is not glorious; it isn’t. I mean, if you take glory, the Hebrew word for glory—*kabod*—means heavy, or of substance, or weighty. My life right now—worrying about the client who just called—is ephemeral; it’s passing away. I need things that are heavy, that are of substance, that will last forever.

 So it says, *“When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”* My life is hidden with Christ in God. Glory, hallelujah!—in glory, in substance, in weight. I have the full substance of God—the God who created the universe that is what? Two trillion galaxies; each galaxy having 200- to 400 billion stars! All of that weight and substance—everything about that—that’s me; that’s mine in Christ, because the God who made those is greater than that.

 Okay. Any thoughts at this point? Okay, next: *The resurrection is not the same as heaven.*

 What is heaven for the ones who are in Christ? After one is in Christ—that means me and you!—he or she is in the Lord’s presence. That’s the first thing I can know. When I die what’s going to happen? I’m going to be in the Lord’s presence.

 And how do I know that? Here are some verses. Jesus to the thief on the cross: *“Today you will be with Me in Paradise.”* 2 Corinthians 5:8: *“ We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”* Okay, “you will be with Me in Paradise” and “at home with the Lord.”

 Philippians 1:21: *“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. … My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.”* So while I’m in the presence of Christ at death because I’m in Him, I’m already with Him now; I’m just going to lose this body. Yet I don’t believe that I actually experience much at that time. I am asleep in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:51: *“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.”*

 So obviously Paul is talking about some who are asleep, which means they are dead in the Lord, and there are some who are alive and they are in the Lord. And they are around today.

 *“Jesus said to him, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.’*

 *“The disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, if He has fallen asleep, he will recover.”*

 Well what were the disciples thinking? They were thinking, *he’s actually taking a snooze,* or he has some kind of illness that makes him look like he’s asleep. No, “he’s asleep, but I mean something else by that.”

 *“The tombs also were opened*” at the Crucifixion; remember that? *“And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.”* And I’m going to give you some other verses.

 Acts 7:60: *“Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”* It’s Stephen in his preaching. *“And when Stephen had said this, he fell asleep.”* Remember that Stephen was stoned. It doesn’t say that he died; it says that he fell asleep.

 *“Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.”* 1 Thessalonians: *“Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.”*

 2 Peter, about the scoffers at those who believe: *“Where is the promise of His coming?”* You promise that the Lord is going to come again; where is the promise of His coming? *“For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were.”*

 So I believe that when we die, based on the Scriptural teaching, that we are in the presence of God. But I might say that the closest thing to it is being asleep. The question I have, then, is will we recognize others in heaven? It’s important to remember that heaven is not an enhanced or improved relationship. And people talk like that. “Oh, I can’t wait to see my grandparents! I’ll go up and greet them.” It’s not just different, but it’s improved. So it’s kind of an improved earth, without any of the bad things.

 And we hear this at funerals. We actually hear this from the pulpit. And I don’t think that Scripture teaches that. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13: *“Now I know in part. But then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”*

 So what I know about the afterlife is that I only know in part. But then I will know fully, in time. But this is a more convincing verse for me in 1 Corinthians 2: *“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

 If heaven is an enhanced or improved earth, then my eye has seen it, my ear has heard it, and my heart has imagined it. But what he’s saying is that in the life to come, in heaven none of those things will be true. But if death is more like sleep then Ecclesiastes 9:5 is correct: *“The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing.”*

 So I kind of liken it to this. When I was young—when I was a kid, probably about ten years old; this was in the ‘50s,--we lived in South Bend, Indiana. And we would drive down to see my grandparents at St. Pete Beach in Florida. There were no interstates. It was a long, long drive, because South Bend, as you know, is right on the border with Michigan’s far northern part.

 And we would leave at night. It would be late afternoon and we would get in the car. No seat belts, remember that? We had a Country Squire station wagon with wood paneling on the side, and away we would go. We would drive through the night. My dad would drive through the night to get us there.

 I would say to my dad, “Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?” And my dad would say, “Just put your head in my lap and go to sleep. And when you wake up, we’ll be there.”

 And sure enough that was true. I’d put my head in his lap and go to sleep for the night. And when I woke up we were in Florida, which is almost like being in heaven if you’re from South Bend. *(Laughter)* Not quite. Remember that I can imagine it and my ear can hear it.

 So therefore, after we’re resurrected, what is the spiritual body like? I’m telling you, I don’t believe that when we die that we know and we have knowledge, and we can experience loved ones, for instance. We’re in the presence of Jesus, just as I was in the presence of my father when I put my head down on his lap.

 The analogy just struck me. It’s almost like one way of thinking about it, that when you’re in Jesus, when you’re in Christ, Dad says, “Put your head in my lap.” And I say, “Okay, I will.” And it’s kind of like that to be in Christ is to be in the arms of Jesus from that point on, whether you’re alive, you’re asleep, or you’re resurrected from that point on.

 What will the spiritual body be like? Yes?

 **David Miller:** Can you comment on the rich man and Lazarus?

 **Ted:** Yeah, right? What I do with that is, that’s a story. I don’t know if that’s meant as a teaching doctrine. A parable is not necessarily analogous with a teaching. Go ahead.

 **Don Bishop:** One of the few that has names.

 **Ted:** Yes. What was the significance of that? Go ahead.

 **Don:** Well, the others don’t have names.

 **Ted:** Yeah. See, that would stand out as unique in my mind’s eye. That’s almost kind of a separate story. And then I would have to ask: What is the purpose of that story? Is it to teach us that Lazarus and the rich man can kind of communicate over the great gap or see people, this kind of thing?

 It’s kind of like trying to build a doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. What happened? The story itself is not sufficient to do that; it has to be supported throughout Scripture. And I just don’t feel it’s supported, because it keeps referring to being asleep. Why doesn’t it say something else and use another word than that? That’s a persistent teaching that when we die we go to sleep. And when I’m dead I don’t know anything more than I knew when I was sleeping on my father’s lap. But I knew I was with my father, and I knew I was in his lap. And I knew that when I woke up I didn’t wake up in a fright, like where in the heck am I? He promised me that when I woke up we would be in Florida. And that’s what happened.

 But I take your point. I mean, I understand and I knew that it was going to come up; I just don’t want to deal with it. *(Laughter)* You know how it is. Yes?

 **Gary Dunbar:** Who then in Revelation asks, “How much longer?”

 **Ted:** Right; that’s a good question. I mean, I’ve studied that. What do I have here? You know, I’ve got the whole question of what it means to be in heaven. There are a lot of things going on in the book of Revelation. It’s hard to build a doctrine on the book of Revelation, except as it’s supported in other parts of Scripture, like the new heavens and the new earth that Peter talks about.

 But even in the book of Revelation not all the saints are there. There are 144,000 and there are others who have been beheaded. But it doesn’t say that everybody, all the saints, are in—

 **Gary:** We’re not going to get into this right here.

 **Ted:** No.

 **Gary:** But the 144,000 stand for all the saints.

 **Gary Craig:** Doesn’t Revelation talk about the dead being under the throne?

 **Ted:** Yes, but that’s not all the dead. I mean, I’ve done some work on it. Yes?

 **Gary:** It isn’t like they’re not in the same presence.

 **Ted:** Yes, that’s right. I just think that the overwhelming teaching if you go through the Scriptures is—and we may not want to hear that; it doesn’t sell well at a funeral!--that to promise people that when they die they will see their loved ones and be reunited with them, I don’t think it’s supported by Scripture. I don’t find any teaching like that; nothing says that in Scripture. Go ahead, Mike.

 **Mike:** What we find in Revelation 20 is the great white throne judgment.

 **Ted:** Yeah.

 **Mike:** And what we see there is the new heavens and the new earth which comes down, and then we all enter together into the holy city.

 **Ted:** Right; beautiful.

 **Mike:** There is nobody ahead of us; we enter in together at the great white throne judgment.

 **Ted:** Right. And they were raised for that judgment.

 **Mike:** Then we’ll be together.

 **Ted:** That’s right. And that’s good. Thank you, Mike; I agree. Yes?

 **Gary Craig:** I just want to say that people say at funerals, “Oh, they’re in a better place,” and all this stuff. I think that is somewhat the wrong approach, because the Bible says to mourn with those who mourn. And I think that’s what we need to do at funerals, because we hear that they’ll be in heaven and all that stuff. Well, in real life it’s not always clear whether these people are in heaven or not.

 **Ted:** Right, yes.

 **Gary:** *(Unclear)* So I think it’s better just to mourn and cry with them.

 **Ted:** Right.

 **Gary:** It’s better to develop empathy with them rather than—

 **Ted:** Sure. I mean, funerals are difficult to know what to say. The guy that trained me early in the ministry studied *The Book of Common Prayer.* He said there are two kinds of funerals you can give based on the readings. One is for those who are the saints and going on to be with the Lord, and there is one for other ones who are going to hell. I don’t enjoy doing funerals at all just because of the ambiguity, not because I can’t make my way through it.

 So let’s touch base before we’re over. What will the spiritual body be like? *“Someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’ So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown perishable will be raised imperishable. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”*

 So what Paul says is that at the resurrection, at our resurrection, we get what is called a spiritual body. And this is not a ghostly body, but a body of substance, and it’s called spiritual.

 What was the spiritual body of Jesus like? I mean, we have to ask ourselves the question. If you want to find out what your spiritual body is going to be like, what was Jesus’ spiritual body like? As He was raised, so we will be raised, in the same way. *“Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the Man of heaven.”*

 So at the resurrection we will bear His image. So what was He like? Well, *“the doors being locked, Jesus came and stood among them.”* Well, maybe the door was locked and He was hiding in a back room at the time, and He said, “I’m here!” *(Laughter)*

 But we don’t believe that. We believe that He was locked out of the room. And how did He get in the room? I mean, does He have substance? Does He have molecules? I don’t know how that all works out. If all my molecules align perfectly with the molecules of this wall I can go through it. But I don’t know how that works. So anyway the door is locked.

 On the road to Emmaus, *“their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and He vanished from their sight.”* He comes into rooms and leaves meetings. How did it happen? That’s the spiritual body; that’s what the spiritual body is like.

 Was Jesus sitting over there with the two disciples? Did they say, “Oh, look over there!”, and he scooted out? Did he say, “I have to take a phone call?” No, I think he just actually vanished from their sight.

 Where did He go? That’s the spiritual body. That’s your spiritual body.

 Luke 24: *“As the Emmaus disciples were talking about these things, Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be to you!’ But they were startled and frightened, and thought that they saw a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”* That’s a spiritual body. “Touch me! Hug me!”

 And I like this last one out of Luke 24. *“Jesus asked them, ‘Do you have anything to eat?’ And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish. And He took it and ate it in their presence.”*

 He didn’t say, “Look over there!” It’s not like “Casper, the Friendly Ghost.” He didn’4t take the fish and it dropped to the ground. So He could show up and walk in places. He could vanish in the sight of people. He could be touched and challenged people to touch Him. And He could eat. That’s His spiritual body; that’s my spiritual body at the resurrection of the dead. Yes?

 **David:** There were a few examples of people who died. For example Samuel was able to talk to Saul.

 **Ted:** Yeah.

 **David:** And then also Moses and Elijah were able to talk to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

 **Ted:** Mm-hmm. Right. Once again those are stories. And I guess I’m quoting some stories here, too, aren’t I? I don’t know what to say.

 **Gary Craig:** I don’t really think it says anything; they just made an appearance and disappeared. So they weren’t there long enough to eat or to do anything anyway.

 **Ted:** Now finally wrapping up, when do I get my resurrected or spiritual body? When do I get that? 1 Thessalonians 4: *“The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with the cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead will rise first.”* So at the end of time, the sound of the trumpet, at the end of time and the wrap-up of all human history and existence, then the trumpet sounds and the dead will be raised.

 In 1 Corinthians Paul talks about it again. He said it in 1 Thessalonians 4 and in 1 Corinthians 15. *“The trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed.”*

 And then finally the thing we need to look for in Revelation 21: *“I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man! God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning or crying or pain or any such thing, for the former things have passed away.”*

 I just find that in sermons at funerals people talk about that when you’re in heaven all of the tears will be wiped away. It doesn’t happen until Revelation 21 with the new heaven and the new earth. That’s when all the action takes place, because it’s not possible for you to be a completely whole person without your body. Spirit, soul, body; you need your body to be everything that God meant you to be. That’s what Jesus had, and that’s what’s promised to me. Any other thoughts?

 Things to think about! The emphasis is to be on the resurrection of the dead: how we are witnesses of that. And that happens when the Lord returns and gives us spiritual bodies, when we wake up and we’re in Florida, having all the time being in my father’s lap.

 **Mike:** We have a great hope and a future.

 **Ted:** We have a great hope and a future. It’s the only thing that matters, because what we have now—and I know that a lot of us are old guys!—Jordan doesn’t understand this, but a lot of us are old guys. Well Bob for that matter, and John for that matter. *(Laughter)* But the thing is that you can all see as you get older the process of falling apart, can’t you? I lost a tooth, high blood pressure, prostate enlargement. I mean, all these things start to happen to us. We’re not going in the right direction. I need a new body, that’s what I need. And I’m going to get it at the resurrection. Yes, Jordan?

 **Jordan Obaker:** Something that I don’t know that I spend a lot of time thinking about because I’m young,--

 **Ted:** Yeah.

 **Jordan:** Is making funeral types of plans for myself, the way they should be. And I know it’s becoming more and more common for people to just use cremation because it’s cheaper, and a number of things like that.

 **Ted:** Mm-hmm.

 **Jordan:** But I was talking to someone at the church because our church had a lot of land. Churches don’t bury people on their property anymore. We have all this land. Maybe I should look into that. And the person I was talking to is a professor at the seminary. He said that one of the greatest witnesses that you can have as a Christian is going through a burial, because you are testifying that you will be raised again. Not to say that God can’t raise your body if you’re cremated, like martyrs and so forth. Obviously they don’t have more power than God in that sense. But it really got me thinking. That is a witness, to be buried in the ground, with the hope that one day the Lord will raise this body, and he will change it.

 **Ted:** Mm-hmm. Right.

 **Jordan:** But that can be a witness in and of itself to your family, friends and loved ones. This is what I believe, and I’m going to put myself around here and wait for that day to happen.

 **Ted:** Well if the Lord tarries another five hundred years, you won’t be there. The marker might be there.

 **Jordan:** Sure.

 **Ted:** I mean, when we lived in England there was another village about ¾ of a mile across an open field. And we would take our daughter on walks across that field and come back to visit the village. Maybe there were twelve or thirteen houses in that village, and there was an ancient medieval church in that village.

 And one day we went there. We were in the graveyard and we saw a plywood board on the ground. So that’s odd! So I picked it up, and in it was a hole. And I reached down; it was pretty far down. And I suspect that it was for what they call remains.

 But then I looked on the side of that hole. And it looked to me to be like twigs or something like that. So I took a stick that was on the ground and started to flip something. That was a human bone. So many people had been buried there for the last 700 or 800 years, and that was all that was left. And you give those bones another five hundred years or beyond that and there’s going to be nothing there.

 So “what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, what the heart has not conceived” has been prepared. So what my resurrection body is going to be like, that is almost inconceivable, except that Jesus gave us some hints to what it is going to be like. I can come, I can go. I can spend time with you. You can touch me; it will be physical. But you can’t really conceive of that, can you?, because nobody has ever been like that.

 So anyway, thanks; that’s fine. It is a witness. I’m thinking about getting cremated myself. I want to speed the process: “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in a sure and certain hope of the resurrection from the dead.” Any other thoughts? Mike, please?

 **Mike:** I’ve got a spot in the cemetery with no trees around so that when I come out I don’t hit any trees. *(Laughter)*

 **Ted:** In England all the time they are digging up graves that nobody knew existed there because they built over the top of them. So anyway, one more. Go!

 **David:** 2 Corinthians 5 talks about abandoning this earthly tabernacle and trading it in for our permanent home.

 **Ted:** Yeah.

 **David:** So are you saying that we don’t have a permanent home in heaven until we get our bodies?

 **Ted:** Yes, I would say that. I think the body is critical to our eternity. I think we absolutely have to have a body as we need a soul and a spirit. Jesus had all three. As He was, so will we become, as He is. That’s what I’m thinking.

 Okay, go in peace. We’ll see you next Friday. Who’s teaching? Jordan, and he’s going to be talking on life in heaven. *(Laughter)* Peace to you. *(Applause)*