



from the desk of . . .
Rande Wayne Smith
D.Min., Th.M., M.Div.

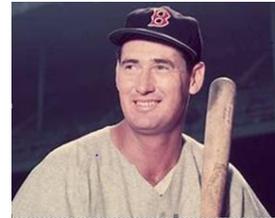
#819
16 September 2018

The Apostles' Creed - 12

... THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY; AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN

1 Corinthians 15:20

Is Ted Williams (X) dead or what? ...
Now the reason I ask, if you're a baseball
fan, you may know that this
hall-of-famer suffered a fatal heart attack some years
ago at the age of 83.



His body was immediately packed in a crate
of ice, & sent to Scottsdale, AZ to the
Alcor Life Extension Foundation. (X)



Once Ted "arrived" in his crate, the staffers opened
it up, drilled holes in his head, & inserted temperature
probes ... (which, I suspect, are really going to hurt if
he's ever brought back to life).

Then they took 60% of the water from his cells, &
replaced it with a human anti-freeze. They then lowered
his body temperature to a negative 196 degrees Celsius.
(There are some old sport's writers who've suggested
that this actually kind of warmed Ted up!)



Then they put him in a waterproof sleeping bag & lowered him, head 1st, into a stainless-steel cylinder (X) filled with liquid nitrogen.

Are you picturing this? ...

Rick Riley, who used to write for Sport's Illustrated, & is now a commentator on ESPN ... he's a really funny guy ... says, you've got to get a kick out of this because in his retirement Ted Williams was a noted deep-sea fisherman,

& now today he's hanging upside down by a hook. ...

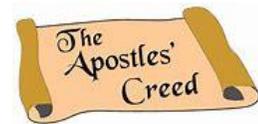
Riley says somewhere a whole lot of marlin are laughing.

So, is Ted Williams dead or what? ... No, according to the Alcor Life Extension Facility. He's completed his 1st life cycle, & now he's in his 2nd life cycle.

So, is this the best we can hope for following our death ... being brought back 20 or 30 years later to extend our life on this planet? Is that your hope? ...

This morning we're concluding a 12-week series that we began back in June on The Apostles' Creed ... (X)

a basic statement of faith that's been around since the 2nd or 3rd century.



These are the truths that followers of Jesus believe. These are the truths that we affirm. And this morning we're going to conclude our study of The Apostles' Creed with a statement about the future ... we're going to see what we have to look forward to in the afterlife.

Scripture describes our resurrected life in a variety of passages, but 1 Corinthians 15 is the central one. If you have questions about "the resurrection body & life everlasting" this is where to find the answer.

Listen now to Good News from Paul to the Church in Corinth, & to the Church also here in Rolling Meadows.

Within your hearing comes the Word of the Lord ...

"The truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised." (1 Corinthians 15:20)

May the Lord grant that we may engage in contemplating the mysteries of His Heavenly wisdom with really increasing devotion, to His glory and to our edification. Amen

So, this morning I want us to ask the questions that an investigative reporter would ask ... (X)

who, what, where, why, when, & how.



Let's get started ... on what basis do we believe what we just recited in the Apostles' Creed about the resurrection of the body, & life everlasting? How can followers of Jesus believe something so absolutely crazy? Our bodies are going to be resurrected from the dead ... are you kidding me? ... It's never been done.

I mean, people die & are buried ... & that's the end.

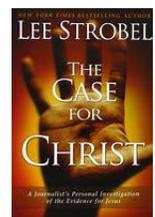
But wait a moment, what do you mean it's never been done. ... Followers of Jesus believe that it has been done.

And we believe that there's plenty of evidence for it. There are even eyewitness accounts to support this particular statement that Jesus "rose from the dead".

"I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; that he was buried & that he was raised to life 3 days later, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter & then to all 12 apostles. Then he appeared to more than 500 of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, & afterward to all the apostles.

"Last of all he appeared also to me." (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

There were **eyewitnesses** to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But, just in case you're struggling about the credibility of those eyewitness accounts, I encourage you to read Lee Strobel's book, (X) "The Case For Christ." Lee was a Yale Law School graduate, former legal affairs editor for the Chicago Tribune, former atheist, who became convinced, by the evidence, that Jesus rose from the dead.



So, what is the basis for our belief that one day our bodies will be resurrected from the dead? ...

We believe that because Jesus **rose from the dead**.

We believe in our future resurrection because a resurrection has already taken place.

"The truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised." (1 Corinthians 15:20)

"**Guarantee**" means a pledge that obligations will be met.



Do you remember Roger Banister? ...

(X) He was the 1st person to ever run a mile under 4 minutes. Before Roger ran his sub 4-minute mile, many track experts said it just couldn't be done. It was humanly impossible.

It could even be dangerous to a person's health.

And then Roger Banister came along, & he broke the 4-minute mile. And people started saying, "it can be done. Roger Banister has done it." And suddenly, one person after another started breaking it. I looked on the internet to see how many people have done it so far.

I didn't even count them. There must be at least 5,280 ... page after page after page after page.

What was once considered humanly impossible is now being done by High School students.

It couldn't be done ... until Roger Banister did it.

A resurrection of the body seems to be humanly impossible ... **but it's been done.** And one day a bunch of people are going to follow suit. This "what" is the basis behind our belief in our own resurrection.

We believe it; Jesus rose from the dead as
 "the guarantee that those who sleep in death
 will also be raised."

2nd question ... who? When I say "our resurrection" ...
 who am I talking about? ... Who will experience
 "the resurrection of the body & the life everlasting"? ...

Paul writes "And now I want to remind you, my friends,
 of the Good News which I preached to you,
 which you received, & on which your faith stands firm.
 That is the gospel, the message that I preached to you.
 You are saved by the gospel if you hold firmly to it -
 unless it was for nothing that you believed."

(1 Corinthians 15:1-2)

Paul talks about people who have been "saved."
 Saved from what? ... Saved from everlasting death ...
 saved from the prospect that their body will remain in
 the grave forever.

Who are these people who have been saved with the
 promise of everlasting life? ... They are those who have
heard the Good News about Jesus Christ, & put their
faith in Him, & taken their stand on this **truth**.

Let's suppose this morning I said to you, (X)
 "I have a crisp, \$100 bill for every person here
 who will stop by the information table on the way out &
 pick it up." (This is hypothetical, by the way.) Now, who
 will get those \$100 bills? ... Everybody who claims one.



Does that mean that everyone will walk out of this place \$100 richer? ... Probably not.

Why not? ... Well, there would be a group of people who would say, "That's ridiculous, he'd never do that." They just wouldn't believe me. They wouldn't want to appear gullible, & so they'd walk right past.

There'd be another group who wouldn't get their \$100 because they were so busy that they just forgot to stop & pick it up. They're talking to their friends. They're in a hurry to get some of Sean & Heidi's tasty goodies out by the nursery.

And sometime this evening they're going to slap themselves on the forehead ...

"stupid idiot, I forgot to pick up my \$100."

Still others wouldn't pick up their \$100 out of sheer scorn. "What's Rande doing, giving away \$100? How irresponsible. If I want \$100 I'll go out & earn \$100.

I don't want to be indebted to him."

The only people who would get the \$100 are those who stopped & picked it up. The offer isn't exclusive.

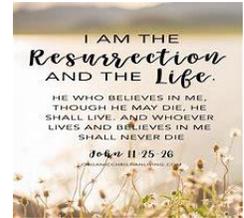
Anybody can get it. But only some will.

You see where I'm going with this. ...

A resurrected body, life everlasting ... step right up. But only some will. Others will consider it too unbelievable to be true, & never receive it.

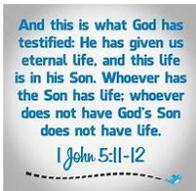
Others will become so distracted with this world, with their houses, their jobs, their families; they'll never stop to get hooked up with Jesus. And still others will scorn, & say, "If I want something from God I'll work for it, thank you." And reject it as an offer of a free gift.

Listen to Jesus' take on this ... (X) "I am the resurrection & the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; & those who live & believe in me will never die." (John 11:25-26)



And the Apostle John states it about as clearly as

possible. (X) "The testimony is this: God has given us eternal life, & this life has its source in his Son. Whoever has the Son has this life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:11-12)



I'm asking you this morning as pointedly as I can ... are you certain, (I'm not talking about being $\frac{1}{2}$ sure, I'm not talking about being 80% confident), are you totally certain that you will have a resurrected body & life everlasting? Are you certain that your life is wedded to Jesus? Because if you're not absolutely sure ... then I'm pleading with you, come talk to me ... don't leave here today without the certainty that you're one of the "who."

This is not an offer that everyone will **take God up on**.

3rd question ... why?

Why is the resurrection of the body such a big deal? ...

Let's suppose for a moment that this is just a bunch of nonsense. What if "when you're dead you're dead"?

What do we stand to lose by accepting this belief?

Again, Paul provides the answer.

"If Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach & you have nothing to believe.

More than that, we are shown to be lying about God, because we said that he raised Christ from death - but if it is true that the dead are not raised to life, then he did not raise Christ. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion & you are still lost in your sins. It would also mean that the believers in Christ who have died are lost. If our hope in Christ is good for this life only & no more, then we deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world." (1 Corinthians 15:13-19)

Paul gives us several reasons why belief in the "resurrection of our bodies" is of critical importance. 1st ... if there's no resurrection then the whole Christian message is a **hoax**. It's one big lie.

We've all been deceived.

The politically correct police, those who push tolerance today, tell us that if we boil Christianity all down, it's simply ... "love your neighbor as you love yourself." (Mark 12:31) That's all it is.

Well, that's just not so.

The central truth, the foundational doctrine of the Christian faith is that Jesus Christ **rose from the dead**.

Take that away & nothing else can be trusted.

Paul declares that preachers like he, like me, have been telling the mother of all lies; so, don't believe another word we say ... if the resurrection is false.

2^{ndly}, Paul writes, "If Christ has not been raised ... you are still lost in your sins." Let me explain what's happening here. We believe that God is a just God. (2 Thessalonians 1:5) And that means He can't allow wrongdoing to go unpunished & still remain just. So, somehow sin has to be accounted for, your sin, my sin.

Now we have a choice; we can either pay the penalty for our sin ourselves, or we can put our hope & trust in a substitute who is willing to pay it on our behalf ...

which is what Jesus claimed to do upon the cross.

Some people might wonder how we know if what Jesus did on the cross was sufficient payment.

How do we know that it worked? That God is satisfied?

The answer to that is very simple ...

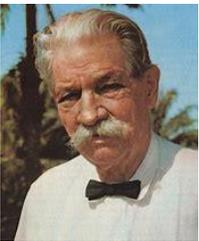
Jesus triumphed over death.

If we take away the resurrection of Jesus Christ, then who's going to pay for our sin? A just God is going to demand payment. What are we going to do in order to get forgiven? What's our plan "B"? ...

Here's another reason ... no resurrection means that our loved ones, who believed in Jesus & have died, are gone forever. We'll never see them again.

You can talk all you want about "living on" in our memories ... but what hope is that for someone who's standing at the grave of a loved one? ...

A 4th reason ... if there's no resurrection then Christianity is only good for this life. And if it's only good for this life then followers of Jesus are to be "pitied". People should feel sorry for us.



(X) Dr. Albert Schweitzer said that it didn't really matter whether Jesus rose or not. In fact, he said it didn't really matter if Jesus even lived on earth or not. It's the "idea" of Jesus ... His moral code, a sense of purpose in life ... that's what's important.

Dr. Schweitzer may have been smart medically, but theologically he was stupid. Paul states that if this life is all there is then our hope has been a delusion & we're living in a fairy tale. In fact, we've made sacrifices for a future that doesn't exist. (Matthew 6:20) That's the "why".

Question #4 ... what does this resurrected life look like? Are we disembodied souls? Are we angels? Do we become superheroes? What does Scripture say about the state of our resurrected bodies? ...

Paul writes ... "Someone will ask, 'How can the dead be raised to life? What kind of body will they have?' You fool! When you plant a seed in the ground, (X) it does not sprout to life unless it dies. And what you plant is a bare seed, perhaps a grain of wheat or some other grain, not the full-bodied plant that will later grow up. God provides that seed with the body he wishes; he gives each seed its own proper body."
 (1 Corinthians 15:35-38)

When You Sow, You Do
 Not Plant The Body That
 Will Be, But Just A Seed,
 Perhaps Of Wheat Or Of
 Something Else.
 1 Corinthians 15:37
 BibleWording.com

Paul's suggesting that there's a continuity between our current body, that's planted like a seed in the grave, & our future resurrected body. Now he goes on to say that there will be a magnificent difference too, because the stock of wheat is nothing like that tiny little seed.

"And the flesh of living beings is not all the same kind of flesh; human beings have one kind of flesh, animals another, birds another, & fish another.

"And there are heavenly bodies & earthly bodies; the beauty that belongs to heavenly bodies is different from the beauty that belongs to earthly bodies. The sun has its own beauty, the moon another beauty, & the stars a different beauty; & even among stars there are different kinds of beauty.

"This is how it will be when the dead are raised to life. When the body is buried, it is mortal; when raised, it will be immortal.

When buried, it is ugly & weak; when raised, it will be beautiful & strong. When buried, it is a physical body; when raised, it will be a spiritual body.

There is, of course, a physical body, so there has to be a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:39-44)

Let me explain what's being taught here in these contrasts that Paul gives. What's the difference between the current body that we have that, unless Jesus returns, will someday be laid in a grave ... & the resurrected body to come? ... The body we presently have is mortal ... it will be immortal. Do you see any signs of mortality in your present body? Of course, we all do!

2nd contrast, when buried, our present body is ugly & weak; when raised, it will be beautiful & strong. What's Paul talking about? Have you ever seen somebody die of cancer? It stinks. Pain, loss of hair, nausea. Ever see someone with Parkinson's who used to be healthy & strong & now wobble as they walk? Ever see someone struck down by MS & sitting in a wheelchair?

Brian has shared with us the struggles his Mom, Lorraine, is going through now with Alzheimer's.

That's ugly.

We had Dorothy's memorial service here yesterday. If you hadn't seen Dorothy in the past few years ... she might have been even a little hard to recognize.

Her body was not "beautiful."

Scripture teaches that our resurrected bodies will be.
They're going to be magnificent.

3rd contrast ... our present bodies are weak; our heavenly bodies will be strong. Don't just think physical strength here. It's much broader than that.

Do you have any emotional weaknesses in your life?

Do you have any relational weaknesses?

Do you have any intellectual weaknesses?

Do you have any spiritual weaknesses?

One day all those weaknesses that held us captive,
that so characterize our lives here on earth,
will be replaced with strength.

One final contrast ...

we now have a physical body, we will have a spiritual body.

Now the term "spiritual" doesn't mean immaterial,
it doesn't mean we're going to be a ghost.

"Spiritual" in Scripture refers to a person who is **responsive** to God. It's a person who is led by God's Spirit. Paul explains that one day we will be totally in sync with God. We will be totally spiritual. I don't know about you, but I'm really looking forward to the day that I obey God wholeheartedly.

So, when's that going to happen?

Don't we get our new body when we die?

We often talk like that about life after death.

If your grandmother dies, & she suffered in her final years with painful arthritis ... you stand at her casket with loved ones, & think of Grammy with her new body doing cartwheels down the streets of gold in Heaven. It's a great thought.

But is that what Scripture teaches? ...

Paul writes about the timing of our new bodies.

"Listen to this secret truth: we shall not all die, but when the last trumpet sounds, we shall all be changed in an instant, as quickly as the blinking of an eye. For when the trumpet sounds, the dead will be raised, never to die again, & we shall all be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

When does the exchange of a dead body for a resurrected body take place? ...

According to this ... it happens when Jesus returns at the end of time. Okay ... suppose I die today, but Jesus doesn't come back for 100 years, what's going to happen to me, bodily speaking, for the next century? ...

Theologians refer to this as the intermediate state ... the period between when we die & the time that Jesus returns & all bodies are resurrected from the grave.

Now unfortunately Scripture doesn't have a whole lot to say about this intermediate state. It has a lot to say about the here & now. It has a lot to say about the everlasting life we'll live if we've come to faith in Jesus.

But it says very little about the intermediate state. And so, we're left to surmise. So here are the 3 best positions of what it'll be like, & you can take your pick.

There are some theologians who teach that we'll get our resurrected bodies the instant we die because there's no concept of time in eternity.

In this life it may be another 100 years before Jesus returns & resurrects our dead bodies, but in eternity we're not going to have to wait for that event to take place, because the time between when (X) we die & Jesus' return will be like a blink of the eye. (2 Peter 3:8) There's no time in eternity.



It's an interesting concept.

Option #2 ... some theologians say that God will give us an intermediate body before we get our final, eternal resurrected body. Now personally, I've never really liked that. It always struck me as driving around Heaven in a rental car. I don't want a "loaner" when I get to Heaven.

But, if we stop & think about it ... this body right now is a loaner, isn't it? ... And it's not been a total disaster. I've walked around in this for 71 years & it's had some good points, & it's bound to be a trade-up to an intermediate stage body. So, this could be a possibility.

Option #3 ...

after death our soul goes straight to Heaven.

But it then waits until Jesus returns
to get a corresponding body.

Now that's not really bad when we stop & think about it ... because our soul is who we really are. Our soul is the immaterial part of us. So, when we die we, our soul, goes immediately into the presence of God. (X)

Paul teaches "to leave our home in the body ... is to be at home with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8)



And then one day in eternity, what is good will get even better, because Jesus will return to earth & give us resurrected bodies.

Personally, I like option 3,
but Scripture doesn't rule out the other 2 possibilities.

Here's a 6th & final question ... where should this doctrine of the resurrection of the body & life everlasting lead us? How should it impact us today? What difference should it make in the lives of believers?

The answer is ... **hope**.

"So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal, then the scripture will come true: 'Death is destroyed; victory is complete!'

'Where, Death, is your victory?

Where, Death, is your power to hurt?'

Death gets its power to hurt from sin,
& sin gets its power from the Law.

But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through
our Lord Jesus Christ!

So then, my dear friends, stand firm & steady. Keep
busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know
that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless."

(1 Corinthians 15:54-58)

Hope. Hope for people who have cancer.

Hope for people who have Parkinson's.

Hope for people with Alzheimer's.

Hope for people who have lost loved ones in Christ.

There's hope ... & without it we'd be crushed.

And there's hope for those of us who right now find
life is going just grand. We have life by the tail, but
we're so caught up in the here & now, we forget that
there's a hope out there for the future. And no matter
how good we think this life is ... the best is yet to come.

And regardless, this life is going to be gone just like
that. (The Psalms 103:15-16) So, this message is important
because God wants to tell us,

"Think about what will be forever."

Tomorrow morning get up & say, "I'm not a citizen
here; I'm a citizen of the Kingdom to come. (Philippians 3:20)
And I'm going to live like that. I'm going to live like one
day I'll be transformed into a likeness of Jesus Christ.
And my hope is to take as many people with me as I
possibly can."

You know, often we say in moments of great enjoyment,
 "I don't want this to ever end" ... but it does.
 Heaven, however, will be different.

Let me make a quick comment about the final word,
 that's often taken for granted ... "Amen". (X)



We say "Amen" all the time, but usually
 we don't even think about it. Most of the
 time we treat "Amen" sort of like a punctuation mark.

We say our prayers; & then add an "Amen,"
 & it's come to mean ... the prayer's over.
 But "Amen" means a whole lot more than that.

It's one of only 4 or 5 words that's common in every
 human language. It's the most universal of all words.

Listen to someone pray in Spanish, French, Korean,
 Hebrew, etc. ... & they'll end their prayer with "Amen."

At its most basic level it means ... "we agree."

"I believe in the resurrection of the body;
 & the life everlasting. (say it with me) Amen"

(sing with me)

When we've been there 10,000 years,
 Bright shining as the sun,
 We've no less days to sing God's praise
 Than when we'd 1st begun.

MARANA THA

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
 And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy
 Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was
 crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose
 again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand
 of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the
 living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian Church; the communion of
 saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen

"The truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee
 that those who sleep in death will also be raised." (1 Corinthians 15:20)

There were _____ to the resurrection of Jesus Christ

We believe that because Jesus _____

" _____ " means a pledge that obligations will be met

A resurrection of the body seems to be humanly impossible ... _____

Who are these people who have been saved with the promise of
 everlasting life? ... They are those who have _____ the Good News
 about Jesus Christ, and put their _____ in Him, and taken their stand
 on this _____

The "gift" of eternal life is not an offer that everyone will _____

If there's no resurrection then the whole Christian message is a _____

The central truth, the foundational doctrine of the Christian faith is
 that Jesus Christ _____

"Spiritual" in Scripture refers to a person who is _____ to God

How should the resurrection impact us today? ... The answer is ... _____