

It Is True Because It Works/
It Works Because It Is True
or
The(?) Pragmatic Truth of (the)
Resurrection

Church of the Nations

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Easter Sunday

The resurrection of Jesus

- New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005
- N. T. Wright and John Dominic Crossan
 - Crossan: What matters is the meaning of the resurrection not whether it happened or not
 - (This is **not** Pastor Rick's view)
- Is the resurrection “true” because it works (makes a difference)?
- Or does the resurrection make a difference because it truly happened?

1 Corinthians 15

- “Now brothers (and sisters) I want to remind you of the good news I proclaimed to you. By this good news you are saved. What I received I passed on to you as of first importance. That Christ did for our sins according to the Bible (the Old Testament). That he was buried. That he was raised on the third day according to the Bible. And that he appeared to Peter then the Twelve then more than five hundred.”

1 Corinthians 15 (later)

- “Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised then what we proclaimed has been useless and your faith has been useless.”
- Issue is **why** the resurrection (of Jesus) is so important

Pragmatic Truth

- Truth is practical – true Christian teaching makes a difference (so Paul)
- It is true because it works **and** it works because it is true
- The resurrection of Jesus makes all the difference because it is true

Confirms or **is** the message?

- “The resurrection of the dead is *constitutive* of the gospel” (Richard Hays)
 - Is essential to Christian teaching and makes the Christian message what it is
- What is the purpose of the Christian faith?
 - Deification (so Kallistos Ware)
 - Transformation / union with God / participating in the life of God
 - Saved from brokenness

Bodies and souls

- Does God transform only the “soul”?
- Why not say “Jesus died and his spirit lives forever with God in heaven”?
 - “Some who are called Christians say there is no resurrection of the dead and their souls when they die are taken to heaven” (Justin Martyr)
- Why **”no! – he was raised from the dead”**?
- Why essential to Christian teaching?

What the resurrection shows/does

- God cares about the whole person and the whole creation
 - Spiritual **and** physical!
 - God will not abandon the physical creation
 - God raised/transformed the body of Jesus

Kallistos Ware

- “This idea of *cosmic redemption* (the healing or salvation of the universe) is based upon a right understanding of the incarnation (that God the Son became human). Christ took flesh – something from the material world – and so has made possible the redemption and transformation of *all* creation – not merely the immaterial but the physical” (235)
- Concern for the **environment/creation**

Vladimir Lossky

- “In order to achieve that union with God to which the creature is called (to which we human beings are called) it was necessary to break through three barriers – **sin**, **death** and **nature** (our nature as human beings)”
- **Incarnation** -> nature
- **Crucifixion** -> sin
- **Resurrection** -> death

Richard Hays

- “The resurrection of Jesus offers the real possibility of our transformation into a new life of God [RW - with God?] in which our sin is forgiven and overcome” (261)