

Resurrection – Some Approaches

Peter Rollins Story

BEING THE RESURRECTION

LATE THAT EVENING A GROUP OF UNKNOWN DISCIPLES PACKED THEIR FEW BELONGINGS AND LEFT FOR A DISTANT SHORE, for they could not bear to stay another moment in the place where their Messiah had just been crucified. Weighed down with sorrow, they left that place, never to return. Instead they traveled a great distance in search of a land that they could call home. After months of difficult travel, they finally happened upon an isolated area that was ideal for setting up a new community. Here they found fertile ground, clean water, and a nearby forest from which to harvest material needed to build shelter. So they settled there, founding a community far from Jerusalem, a community where they vowed to keep the memory of Christ alive and live in simplicity, love, and forgiveness, just as he had taught them.

The members of this community lived in great solitude for over a hundred years, spending their days reflecting on the life of Jesus and attempting to remain faithful to his ways. And they did all this despite the overwhelming sorrow in their heart.

But their isolation was eventually broken when, early one morning, a small band of missionaries reached the settlement. These missionaries were amazed at the community they found. What was most startling to them was that these people had no knowledge of the resurrection and the ascension of Christ, for they had left Jerusalem before his return from the dead on the third day. Without hesitation, the missionaries gathered together all the community members and recounted what had occurred after the imprisonment and bloody crucifixion of their Lord.

That evening there was a great festival in the camp as people celebrated the news of the missionaries. Yet, as the night progressed, one of the missionaries noticed that the leader of the community was absent. This bothered the young man, so he set out to look for this respected elder. Eventually he found the community's leader crouched low in a small hut on the fringe of the village, praying and weeping.

"Why are you in such sorrow?" asked the missionary in amazement. "Today is a time for great celebration."

"It may indeed be a day for great celebration, but this is also a day of sorrow," replied the elder, who remained crouched on the floor. "Since the founding of this community we have followed the ways taught to us by Christ. We pursued his ways faithfully even though it cost us dearly, and we remained resolute despite the belief that death had defeated him and would one day defeat us also."

The elder slowly got to his feet and looked the missionary compassionately in the eyes.

"Each day we have forsaken our very lives for him because we judged him wholly worthy of the sacrifice, wholly worthy of our being. But now, following your news, I am concerned that my children and my children's children may follow him, not because of his radical life and supreme sacrifice, but selfishly, because his sacrifice will ensure their personal salvation and eternal life."

With this the elder turned and left the hut, making his way to the celebrations that could be heard dimly in the distance, leaving the missionary crouched on the floor.

Mark Short Ending

Mark 16

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of

you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.’ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

[[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterwards Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]]

Conservative – Liberal

The resurrection is an indisputable event in history. All its spiritual impact comes from this fact.

The resurrection is a spiritual event, expressed in historical language, but probably not an actual historical event.

Most challenging to modern audiences, who have a suspicion of the supernatural. ‘Surely you Christians can’t be so silly as to believe this really happened.’

Most likely to be relativised out of usefulness/ impact. ‘It might be true for you in some vague spiritual way, but not to me...’

Cruciform pattern of life – Exist or insist

If a person came back from the dead in South America or India tonight, how much impact would it have on the world? It might get a documentary made, but not much more than that.

The resurrection does not mean anything unless it insists on a change in us.

Exist
have objective reality or being.

Insist
demand something forcefully