

Becoming human- giving glory. 15 April\_2018.

**(PP1) Becoming human- giving glory x 15 Sunday 15April\_2018.**

**Human condition: live a new life.**

Background text READ **ROMANS 6: 1 – 14.**

**Our AIM for this year is for each of us individually and all of us together to explore what it means to be truly human.** The Biblical argument is that true humans are those made and remade in the image and likeness of God – not a physical likeness because God is Spirit. The New Testament argument and the belief of Christians is that Jesus shows us what it means to be fully human and to enables those who believe and receive him to enter into the experience of human life in fullness (*John 10: 10*).

**We have been asking (Previous sessions): what are the consequence of the Fall – what does “death” mean?** Humanity – men and women did not drop dead immediately – they “began” to die, in their soul and spirit and also **became physically mortal.** The Bible is not a scientific text book, but it does deal with TRUTH.

**“DEATH and Struggle” – including both physical and spiritual mortality has become a part of our human condition (*Genesis 2: 16, 17*). No one is naturally immortal – immortality is a gift of God (*Romans 6: 23. Read Genesis 3: 22*).** The fact of our mortality and struggle is something which should challenge our human pride and limits us in a way which makes us creaturely rather than thinking we are gods. (“Memento mori”). But our struggle also positively makes us what we are and can be a means of growth and opportunity. (Or the converse)

**(PP2) We also have been asking:** if there are consequences to **Falling from God’s grace** what are the consequences of the **Rising of humanity in the form of Jesus Christ?** This Easter we have said that Jesus himself epitomises the human struggle for change **and his struggle and victory over sin and death brings about the Redemption of humanity.** Rising in grace as we live our lives since having surrendered to Jesus.

**John calls Jesus the PROTOKOS** – the first ever to be raised from life never to die again. The first of others to be resurrected. The one with the greatest power and honour. Jesus is Lord of the dead and Lord of the living. Paul in *Colossians 1: 15* says Jesus is the *First born of all creation.*

When Jesus was raised by the power of the Spirit from death he extended his arm to raise all to life. *We will all be raised on the judgement day.* **But will we in life take hold of that for which Christ has taken hold of us (to use the idea of *Philippians 3: 12*).**

**As Jesus rises from death he enables others to also rise as we take a hold of him and allow him to take a hold of us ....He is the first born from the dead. The first of many brothers and sisters. He is the first born of a Resurrection People.**

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*Colossians 1: 18. He is the head of his body, the church; he is the source of the body's life. He is the firstborn son, who was raised from death, in order that he might have the first place in all things.*

*Revelation 1: 5, 6. Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first to be raised from death... he loves us and by his sacrificial death he has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father. To Jesus Christ be the glory and power for ever and ever, Amen!*

**The downwards fall or descent of humanity has been halted and in Christ there is the possibility of redemption. A “falling upwards” is possible.** (- to coin the phrase of **Richard Rohr** and use it of all redeemed people not just those in the second half of life)

**(PP3) It will inevitably mean living by faith not by sight – a different vision.** It will mean being earth based in our struggle but not earth bound in our vision of the possibility of change. It will mean spending time with Jesus (**Romans 6: 11 living in fellowship with God through Jesus**). It will mean discarding the grave clothes – old ways of doing things - and letting them fall away and living differently – being clothed in righteous acts of living.

**This “dying to sin” and rising with Christ is enacted in Christian baptism** according to Paul in Romans 6:4 *By our baptism then we are buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might **LIVE A NEW LIFE**” READ on verses 5 following...*

VV11 and 12 Sin has no power over us. We are argues Paul “dead to sin” – and no one can make a dead body respond to the temptation to sin.

Nevertheless, v13 we are called to “surrender ourselves to God to be used for righteous purposes”.

Paul is not just describing our state/ condition he is calling for those who follow Jesus to STOP SINNING! He is teaching us about our behaviour and actions. Yes God is gracious and forgiving but that is NOT a reason to live a life that is contradictory to our claim to have surrendered our life to be used and available to God.

**“Remember your Baptism”** (*Heidelberg Confession*)

By BEING BAPTISED – we have GONE PUBLIC that our old life is dead, and we are raised up to “live a new life”. Faith may well be a very personal, matter but it is lived out in the public arena in full view of relatives, neighbours and colleagues. (5: 15 *God has given us in Jesus Christ the free gift of life*).

**(PP4) Paul speaks with determination and passion – from his heart.** We are, he says to aspire with God's power (*v4 power of the Father to live a new life*) and the help of others to:

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- Love God with everything we have and
- Love our neighbour, as we love ourself

**READ vv 15 – 23.**

### **Who is your Master? Who is in control in your life?**

Are you able to **break the cycle** of various ways of feeling and behaving? Facebook posting “Cycles”- by Jonathan McReynolds. “*The Devil wants to extend the game – but I’m not going in cycles.*” “*There is power in the Name of Jesus to break every cycle*”. (He talks of generational and also financial cycles).

You will choose again and again who you will surrender to. Will it be to the righteous will of God or will sin be your Master? Paul speaks in a binary/polar way.

He calls us not to be slaves to impurity and wickedness but slaves to righteous doing. **V17 OBEY WITH ALL YOUR HEART the truths found in the teaching you received.** He calls us to be available to the Master for “holy purposes”.

To be fully human, to bring glory to God is to be FREE from the cycles of behaviour that cause us to become less than fully human. Obedience and dedication to God results in a GAIN: a life that is eternal in quality. There is **GRACE** – enabling strength IN UNION WITH CHRIST.

(Why have I put a picture of an earring on the slide? *Exodus 21: 6; Deuteronomy 15: 17. Take an awl and pierce the ear of a bond-slave who is free but chooses to stay and serve their Master*).