

As businesses start to reopen, as life begins to awaken from slumber, and as people slowly begin to emerge from their isolation what greets us in many ways is a new and different world. Life as we know it has been rearranged and out of it will come a “normal”. What that new “normal” will be remains to be seen. But if we have learned anything from this pandemic it is this: the fragility of life and how quickly everything can change. The last couple of months has been marked by uneasiness, and a deep-seated desire for a safer, more permanent existence. Although suffering on a global scale has been tremendous what, if anything, can we learn from it all? The desire for permanence and safety is an interesting angle in which to approach this question. For what is this desire, really? Where does it come from? I believe this uneasy feeling expresses a sacred truth about what it means to be human. For this need for permanence and the obvious contradiction of it in everyday life is but a sad reminder of the disjointed character of our lives; how we were created for purpose and yet we constantly seek meaning. There are moments in life where we are forced to face this broken trajectory. And I believe we are living in just such a moment. These moments don’t last long though. For the new normal which will emerge will soon pass into routine; the new will wear off as we resume our normal activities and schedules. But before this happens let us capitalize on this moment to think about this feeling we feel, and how it expresses a much deeper yearning for a more permanent solution to our fragile state. This yearning has no earthly counterpart. It can only be satisfied by God for it springs from the deepest recesses of our being. It is answered only in Christ who being the very Word of God enfleshed speaks the language of our souls. And when He says, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” He is speaking to our predicament. For Christ spoke of the Way that leads beyond the fragility, the Truth about ourselves and our destiny, and the Life which will have no end.

In moments of tragedy and suffering and change we feel this stirring desire for something more. This desire might better understood as a hope. A hope implanted within every living creature. It is a hope of new creation beyond this broken one we inhabit, it is a hope of a new bodily life that transcends the limitations, which sickness and decay and death place on our current bodies. We confess this hope every week: “I believe...in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.” As Christians, we anticipate a life after this life. Yes, we must first pass through death. But Christ Himself has done away with our morbid fate. He has removed the

anxiety and mystery surrounding death by His own death on the cross. And in and through His death He has opened the way to eternal life. Here resides our confidence— because Christ has died, I will die no more. Because Christ lives I too will live. So death becomes but a passage from this life into resurrection life, from this world into a new creation. Our mortal bodies, these bodies, will pass away and return to the dust. But in the resurrection God will outfit us with new bodies, glorified bodies, bodies that will never perish or run down. Bodies that will be impervious to hunger and thirst, pain and pandemics, tears and sadness. Bodies equipped to stand the test of eternal time.

But this is not the end of the story, only the beginning. Our new bodies will be set in motion in the new creation. For God has promised that He will destroy this present earth, the seen and the unseen will be consumed and will melt into nothing. But out of this formless void, this utter darkness, God will make all things new. God will give to us a new earth upon which to dwell. To live in it and to rule over it. The original earth was given to Adam to govern and to have dominion. But the first Adam failed at his divine task. The new earth will not be entrusted to such unreliable creatures like ourselves, but will be governed by the new Adam, Christ Himself. And Christ will see to it that sin never enters this new creation. Nothing in God's new world will ever know disappointment or frustration or taste decay. Jesus will be personally present in this new creation----standing at the center of this paradise in His glorified body. And before Him every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Him as Lord. We will once again be stewards of God's creation. We will live in unity and harmony. We will know true fellowship and the joys of friendship, which given our current crisis we understand the value of more than ever. In this new creation, beauty will be restored, justice will prevail, and God will reign supreme. We will toil, work and labor, but not by the sweat of brows. The earth will willingly give up her secrets and yield her fruit. And we will once again enjoy our labors and the satisfaction of a job well done. Shadows and darkness will be no more for such things will have no place in the new world. We will work and never grow tired. We will know what it is to be satisfied, content, safe, and at peace dwelling securely under the protective wings of our Lord. And together as His people, we will gather around Christ's throne day by day to honor Him as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and the One from whom all blessings flow. Amen.