



## EASTER EDITION

### Dear Friends,

I have been thinking a lot about the resurrection of Jesus as we approach Easter. Easter, by which I mean, the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, is fundamental to the Christian Faith. Without Easter, there is no risen Jesus. Without Easter, there is no bodily resurrection. Without Easter, death has the final say. Without Easter, there is no answer to the problem of evil. Without Easter, there is no Christianity.

The Apostle Paul stated this bluntly in 1 Corinthians 15:14:

*And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.*

I enjoyed reading French philosopher, Luc Ferry's thoughts about the significance of the resurrection to Christianity and how it informs the Christian view of reality. He is not a believer. But Ferry has a profound sense of what the resurrection means for Christians. Specifically, he recognises that the resurrection demonstrates the centrality of love to Christianity.

Let me explain how that is the case. In doing so, I adapt some of Ferry's ideas. Firstly, the resurrection shows that God's love is personal because he sends his own Son to save sinners (Jn 3:16). Secondly, the resurrection reveals love is stronger than death because not even our own demise can separate us from God's love in Christ (Rom 8:38-9). The resurrection is also the basis for belief in a new creation where believers will be reunited with loved ones (1 Cor 15). Ferry concludes:

*For the Buddhist, the individual is but an illusion, something destined for dissolution and impermanence; for the Stoic, the individual self is destined to merge into the totality of the cosmos; Christianity on the contrary promises immortality of the individual person: his soul, his body, his face, his beloved voice – as long as he is saved by God's grace.*

Love is also integral to belief in the resurrection. The resurrection is an event that occurs within human history. But, as Tom Wright says, it is not simply a highly peculiar event within the present world. The resurrection is "principally, the defining event of the new creation, the world that is being born with Jesus."

This means the resurrection is more like the creation of the world than a mere event within human history. God creates out of nothing. Not even the greatest of scientists will be ever able to explain how God created the world. There is no category for creation out of nothing. It just blows our minds. That explains why God's word says, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible" (Heb 11:3).

Resurrection, like creation out of nothing, is an act of God for which we have no human categories or prior experience. Wright says that to know the resurrection requires a different kind of knowing, "a knowing that involves us in new ways, an epistemology that draws out from us not just the cool appraisal of detached quasi-scientific research but also that whole-person engagement and involvement for which the best shorthand is 'love.'"

Philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, said, "It is love that believes the resurrection." Wright says "love is the deepest mode of knowing" because love not only completely engages with reality other than itself. It also affirms, enjoys and celebrates that other-than-self reality. In other words, to know the resurrection is not to simply believe Jesus rose from the dead as a bald fact. It's to believe that the Creator God who loves me sent his Son to die for me, so that by his death, I may live and love him and my neighbour and enjoy fellowship with God in his good creation, both now and for all eternity.

God Bless,  
Mark Adams