

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

This sermon script is furnished with
the good wishes of the Reorganized Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Program Number 225
Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister
All Rights Reserved

World Headquarters: The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri

The Sermon: THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

Scripture: Book of Mormon, II Nephi 6:24-30.

O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; Yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit. And because of the way of deliverance of our God, the Holy One of Israel, this death, of which I have spoken, which is the temporal, shall deliver up its dead, which death is the grave. And this death of which I have spoken, which is the spiritual death, shall deliver up its dead; which spiritual death is hell; Wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and spirits of men will be restored, one to the other; And it is by the power of the resurrection of the Holy One of Israel.

Be reconciled to God through the atonement of Christ, his only begotten Son, That ye may obtain a resurrection, according to the power of the resurrection which is in Christ

The resurrection of Jesus is the central fact of Christianity, and indeed the most significant fact of all time and all history. In it is the answer to man's questions as to what he is, how he got here, and where he is going. Life takes on a new significance and meaning when viewed in the light of this overwhelming and triumphant fact. He is risen! And because he lives, I too shall live!

The Bible gives historical facts and cites witnesses that make it difficult or impossible to deny the literal and physical resurrection of Christ. With those lines of proof, we have not time to deal in this sermon. We should like to note in passing, however, that the Book of Mormon gives an added witness to the fact of Jesus' resurrection. The Bible tells how the risen Lord appeared to his disciples in the Old World, and records their testimony. The Book of Mormon tells us that Christ appeared in his resurrected body to the people of the American continent, whose prophets had foretold him. They worshipped him as their risen Lord. They saw him; they heard him; they touched him; they too saw the marks of the nails in his body; they bore witness to his resurrection; and they wrote their testimony.

There can be no doubt about it; Jesus rose from the dead. Death could not hold him! His resurrection is indisputable proof of his power and Deity. By

that power he will raise up every man who ever lived since Adam, restoring spirit to body in perfect form, with every limb and joint restored to its proper frame. Male and female, rich and poor, young and old, bond and free, black and white, righteous and wicked -- all shall be raised to immortality, their corruption raised to incorruption, they will be brought before God in their resurrected bodies to be judged according to the deeds done in the flesh. For the righteous it will be a resurrection to endless life and happiness; for the wicked a resurrection of endless damnation.

It is both fitting and just that both body and spirit should share in the rewards or punishments resulting from the deeds done by body and spirit together. The resurrection is assurance that such accountability will be required. Jesus taught that it was better to lose an eye or a hand which caused the physical body to offend, rather than to have the whole body cast into Gehenna in the day of judgment following the resurrection. Body and spirit will be judged, and rewarded or punished together.

The resurrected and immortal body accompanies the spirit through eternity, in reward or punishment, in happiness and bliss, or in misery and woe; for the resurrection does not change personality; it only restores it to unity and completeness by re-uniting spirit and body eter-

nally and inseparably. We shall be the same people, with the same identities and the same personalities, after the resurrection as before. The worthiness of those personalities will determine whether we live with God forever, or live without God forever.

The resurrection is necessary because the mortal body, with its inherited tendencies to corruption and sin and death, must be altered before it can abide in a condition of glory. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; yet spirit alone would be hampered for lack of implementation, even in the kingdom of heaven. Spirit needs body, and body needs spirit. Neither is complete without the other. Paul characterizes death as a nakedness (II Cor. 5:3) and longs for the day when he will be clothed upon with his resurrected and perfected body. The resurrection breaks the bondage of Satan upon man's spirit, and the bondage of the grave upon man's body, and reunites them eternally and inseparably.

It is when we begin to speculate as to how the dead are raised, and about what kind of body we shall have in the resurrection that we are apt to carry speculation too far. Paul's answer to such questioners and speculators was "Thou fool!" He was probably familiar with two radically contrasting concepts -- the idea of the Pharisees that the same identical substance of the body laid in the grave would compose the new body, and the idea of the Greeks that immortal man is only a disembodied spirit. But he says that by the resurrection man receives a spiritual body. What does he mean by "spiritual?" He does not necessarily mean immaterial. He tries to explain by an analogy. There are many kinds of bodies, each one fashioned in the wisdom of God to serve and implement the life within according to the needs, the opportunities, and the restrictions of its environment. The same life that is contained in a grain of wheat may be contained in the new body of a wheat plant. The life contained in a caterpillar eventually is clothed with the body of a butterfly; but it is the same life.

We repeat: spiritual does not mean immaterial. To God, all things are spiritual. According to modern scientific concepts, matter is probably composed of pure spirit, but that does not mean that matter does not exist. Matter does exist. It was created when God called into order the spiritual substances of which matter is made, and organized them to make the earth and all things therein, including the bodies of men.

It is always a characteristic of spirit to gather, to organize, enliven, direct, and control matter -- to clothe itself in a tabernacle of matter. The human body begins with one cell. The life that is in that cell gathers together little by little all the substances that go to make a complete and mature physical body. The spirit that is in that body gives the body life and motion and direction; it is the thought and intelligence which expresses itself through the body; it provides the body continuity in a constantly changing stream of material.

It was not intended by the Creator that matter should ever control spirit; it is not the matter of the soil, but the life in the rose bush which determines whether the roses are to be red or yellow or white. Yet in our imperfect bodies, the spirit is not always in perfect control. We often find ourselves doing what the spirit knows is wrong and sinful. We find ourselves unable to halt the ravages of sickness, pain, decay, and death.

The resurrection makes it possible for spirit and body to be restored again to a proper and perfect relationship with each other, with the spirit exercising full, perfect, and complete dominion over the body -- gathering it together again, organizing it, ruling it, possessing it, and making it "spiritual": that is, dedicated and wholly devoted to the purposes of the spirit which is clothed therein. When the spirit has perfect dominion over the spiritual body there will be no more sickness, disease, decay, pain, corruption, or death.

Beyond this it is not necessary to speculate on what kind of body we shall have. We know that it shall be like Jesus' glorified and perfected body. We know that Jesus' body was recognized and recognizable. His disciples identified him as the same person, the same loving friend they had known. Jesus remembered them. He still loved them as before; he thought about them; he planned for them; he gave them directions for the future. We may be sure, then, that we shall not only see and know him as he is, but that we shall see and know and recognize and remember and love each other, but on a vastly higher and more perfect plane of existence that we know now.

Then thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ. He is risen, and because he lives, you and I too may obtain a resurrection according to the power of the resurrection that is in Christ.