The Incomparable Christ
by John Stott

“I am the resurrection and the life.”
John 11:25a

Friends and Fellowship
McLean Bible Church
Paul Dorosh
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The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, correcting, rebuking and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Tim. 3:16, 17

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Matthew 4:4 and Deuteronomy 8:3

The Cross: Toyohiko Kagawa
(The revelation of the love of God)

- Toyohiko Kagawa (1880-1960), Japanese pastor, organized Japan's first labor union and first nationwide peasant farmers' cooperative
- Before the Second World War he was arrested three times for subversive peace propaganda. But after the war,... the Prime Minister appealed to him... ‘Only Jesus Christ was able to love his enemies... Help me to put the love of Jesus Christ into the hearts of our people.’ (Stott, p. 149)
- ‘As in a single word, Christ’s love-movement is summed up in the cross. The cross is the whole of Christ, the whole of love.’ (Kagawa [p. 149])

Outline
1. The Cross: Toyohiko Kagawa
   (The revelation of the love of God)
2. The resurrection: Joni Eareckson Tada
   (“I’ll be on my feet dancing.”)
3. The exaltation: Henry Martyn
   (Zeal for the honor of Christ’s name)
4. The gift of the Spirit: Roland Allen
   (The Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit)
5. The second coming: Anthony Ashley Cooper
   (A program of social reform)
6. The last judgment: William Wilberforce
   (The abolition of slavery and the slave trade)
   • Discussion: John 11: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead

The Incomparable Christ
Week 1 (June 21): Gospels and Acts
Week 2 (June 28): Paul's letters
Week 3 (July 5): James, Peter and Hebrews
Week 4 (July 12): Early Church Leaders: (chaps. 1-6)
Week 5 (July 19): Later Church Leaders: (Luther onwards)

How Jesus has inspired people: 12 examples
Week 6 (July 26): Biographies part 1
Week 7 (August 2): Biographies part 2
Week 8 (August 9): Revelation part 1
Week 9 (August 16): Revelation part 2

Honor Those Who Deserve Honor
Welcome him (Epaphroditus) in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

Phil. 2:29-30

But no Hero Worship Allowed
... Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as through you did not?

1 Cor. 4:6b - 7
I am grateful for Shinto, for Buddhism, and for Confucianism. I owe much to these faiths. The fact that I was born with a spirit of reverence, that I have an insatiable craving for values which transcend this earthly life, and that I strive to walk the way of the golden mean, I owe entirely to the influence of those ethnic faiths.

Yet these three faiths utterly failed to minister to my heart’s deepest need... Tears were my meat day and night... Buddhism teaches great compassion ... But since the beginning of time, who has declared, ‘this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many unto remission of sins’?

Toyohiko Kagawa (Stott, p. 149f.)

The exaltation: Henry Martyn
(Zeal for the honor of Christ’s name)


“Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Phil. 2:9-11

“No incentive is stronger than the longing that Christ should be given the honor that is due his name.”

Stott, p. 153

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The second coming: Anthony Ashley Cooper
(A program of social reform)

- Anthony Ashley Cooper (Lord Shaftesbury), 1801-1885, British parliamentarian
- Worked to “remedy some of the worst consequences of the Industrial Revolution”
  - 1842 Coal Mines Act: new rules for women and child labor
  - 1845 Lunacy Act: secured the humane treatment of the insane
  - 1847, 1850, 1859: Ten Hours Factory Acts for women, children

“Belief in the [second coming of Christ] has been a moving principle in my life; for I see everything going on in the world subordinate to this one great event.” Ashley Cooper

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Rev. 22:20

The last judgment: William Wilberforce
(The abolition of slavery and the slave trade)

- William Wilberforce (1759-1833), British parliamentarian (1770-1825)

“Wilberforce once summed up his life ambitions in these terms: ‘God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and reformation of manners [habits, attitudes, morals].’”

(Stott, p. 163)

- 7 Abolition of the Slave-Trade Bills failed (1789-1799); bill passed in 1807 after a maritime lawyer showed that the law would help the war against France
- 1833: Abolition of Slavery Bill passed; 3 days later, Wilberforce died.
Our “Moral Accountability to God”

- The “Clapham Sect”, a group of close evangelical friends in South London working to abolish slavery in the British empire

“... [their understanding of their] moral accountability to God... ‘gave the Clapham Sect that entire integrity which acted as salt and leaven in the House of Commons; it was this sense of [accountability] to God that enabled the Anti-Slave Trade team to persevere with their campaigns during a major European war and in the face of 25 years of defeat, disappointment and disillusionment.’”

Michael Hennell (Stott, p. 163)

Give an Account of My Stewardship

“’I voted today so that if my Master had come again at that moment I might have been able to give an account of my stewardship.’” Henry Thornton, (Stott, p. 163)

The resurrection: Joni Eareckson Tada

(‘I’ll be on my feet dancing.’)

- Joni Eareckson Tada (born 1950), paralyzed in a diving accident, initially bitter, frustrated, overwhelmed; later...
- She began to trust God and face the future with realism... became a popular public speaker and writer
- She was helped by the vision of Jesus on the cross, ‘immobilized, helpless, paralyzed,’ as she was. But what helped her most was the resurrection. ‘I have hope for the future now’, she wrote, ‘The Bible speaks of our bodies being “glorified” in heaven ... I now know the meaning of being “glorified”. It’s the time, after my death here, when I’ll be on my feet dancing.’

Joni Eareckson Tada (Stott, p. 151)

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

1 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
2 (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) 3 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

4 When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, 7 and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”
8 “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

John 11:1-8

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead (2)

9 Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. 10 It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up.”

12 His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

John 11:9-16

Physical Resurrection

35 But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 39 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 40 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

1 Cor. 15:35-38, 42-44
Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead (3)

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

John 11:17-24

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead (4)

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

37 But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

John 11:33-39

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead (5)

40 Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

John 11:40-44

Discussion

Read John 11:1-44.

• How does Jesus react to the news that Lazarus is sick? (v. 1-16)

• What does Jesus teach about resurrection? What promises does he make? (v. 23-26)

• Why does Jesus weep? Did he forget that he said he would raise Lazarus from the dead? (v. 33-36)

• How can this passage help us in dealing with the deaths of family members and friends, and with the eventual end of our own lives on earth?

The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Matthew 25:40