

Let's start with the words of Julian Barnes, a preeminent British atheist agnostic writing the opening line of his memoir. *I don't believe in God, but I miss him.* If you were to see the cover of his book, what you would see is this green plot of grass, and right in the middle is this freshly dug grave in which right over the top of it are the words, *Nothing To Be Frightened Of.* The cover itself tips Barnes' hand a bit as to what he believes or is wrestling with in this memoir.

The driving question that pulses through Barnes's memoir as an atheist and an agnostic is, if we don't believe in the afterlife, why do we fear death? It seems that there should be nothing to be frightened of. That is a valid question. I don't believe in God, but I miss him. You see, there's something nagging within Barnes that he can't quite seem to shake, that the Christian influence on the world is indelible, and he can't really argue with that. Part of that comes from his recognition of what it is that he can't quite shake.

He misses God in the sense of the impact it's had culturally. He misses the inspiration that ignited Mozart's *Requiem* or the sculptures of Donatello. Ultimately, he is still caught behind this material frame, and he says there is nothing more beyond this life. He says our brains are merely lumps of meat, and the soul is simply a story that the brain tells itself. Barnes is caught trying to make sense of this world by looking at the afterlife in that nihilistic dread that he can't quite shake. "I don't believe in God, but I miss him." A little bit later, he writes,

It's difficult for us to contemplate fixedly the possibility, let alone the certainty, that life is a matter of cosmic hazard. Its fundamental purpose, mere self-perpetuation, that it unfolds in emptiness, that our planet will one day drift in frozen silence, and that the human species, as it has developed in all of its frenzied and over engineered complexity, will completely disappear and not be missed because there is nobody and nothing out there to miss us. Barnes

Happy Easter! My gut tells me that isn't quite the text you thought would open an Easter sermon! But part of the point is actually not to bash Barnes. I believe Barnes is intelligent, smart, and brilliant, and he's actually putting his finger on a question that isn't just at the heart of his memoir but at the heart of the human condition. He is much like you, me, and many of us in this room who wrestle with this same tension. "I don't believe in God, but I miss him." Is there an angst or something that points to something more? Let me push and introduce you to someone

new, a different character that might bring it a little bit closer to home.

The year is somewhere between 2010 and 2012. I can't quite remember, but it was during my decade-long run as a youth pastor out in the Napa Valley. As a young pastor, I was trying to navigate this group of young people and just nudge them in the direction of the way of Jesus. The strategy rose, and it was pretty clear—cheap pizza, loud music, mediocre teaching, and probably bad jokes. That was the strategy. If I do those things, maybe they'll awaken to the way of Jesus. So one evening, as the loud music churned on and I was throwing away the boxes of cheap pizza—and Lord knows the jokes were probably just as bad—a 7th grader named Elizabeth walked up to me with tears in her eyes and handed me a letter. Before I could even open it, she turned and left.

She was a student that I had known before, one who was wrestling and challenging and struggling with God. So I finished cleaning up the room. I went back to my office late in the night, and as I opened that letter, I began to read about this angst, depressed seventh grader. She'd grown up in church, but the pressure felt all too much. She'd grown up, experienced the stories, and she knew all of the "right answers," but she couldn't shake that it seemed irrelevant to her particular circumstances. At the end of the letter, in large bold letters, she wrote, "God doesn't exist, and what is the purpose of all this? Nothing really matters. I don't believe in God, but I miss him."

For Elizabeth, there was that same sentiment. Life is purely what we experienced and she felt it was purely material. So if it is just material, then Barnes' thesis is right. At some point you die, the lights go out and you just float off in frozen nothingness. Life is just a cosmic hazard of death, nothing to be frightened of because there's nothing that exists on the other side. So you just give yourself away to that existential dread.

But what if there was something more? See, the audacious claim that we, as Christians, make is that there is, in fact, a human material; someone created out of the very image of God that was taken from the dust, the material of the ground, but that isn't their sole existence. Into their nostrils was breathed the Spirit of God. So, humans became a combination of both material and spiritual, and these two came together and must speak of something greater.

What if this hybrid person, this divine inspired, breathed human mixed with the material world, what if there was one who could

enter into the story, give themselves over to all the material world could offer, give themselves to death itself and come out the other side? What if that were to happen? The famed words of another British writer, C. S. Lewis once wrote, "Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important," (*God In The Dock*). There's wisdom there as well. The claims we make, if they are true, if there is one who came, entered into life, went through death, and passed through on the other side, transcending all of just a pure material humanist world, if there is something more, well, then that is of infinite importance, or it's of no importance.

Paul, the apostle, writing earlier than C. S. Lewis or Barnes or Elizabeth in 1 Corinthians 15, said, "*And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost*" (1 Cor. 15:17-18). Paul understands the same thing that Lewis is riffing on, saying if Christ had not been raised, we are to be pitied most.

What are we doing gathering here? I recognize that a room like this on an Easter morning is filled with people across the spectrum of belief. Some of you resonate with Barnes. I don't believe in God, but I miss him. Others of you, like Elizabeth, have been battered by a world that seems to throw you around, and you're left questioning if God even exists. What is the point of all of this? Others of you may resonate with me who stake their life on this resurrection thing, who, as a thoughtful person trying to be well read, still believe that there was a human 2000 years ago who was resurrected from the dead. And if that is true, that changes everything.

In this room, we are across the spectrum of belief. And I want you to hear me say, you are so welcome here. I am so glad you are here because these kinds of questions at the heart of human existence are not too big for us to ask within these walls. I hope I will present not an answer that's trying to push you towards belief but an answer to a question deeper beneath the surface because the question beneath the surface for Barnes, Elizabeth, the apostle Paul, and for you and me isn't so much if the resurrection actually happened. There have been tons of books and sermons preached about that particular topic, and those were healthy in their time.

But I want to ask a different question. I want to ask what difference does it make? If, in fact, Jesus was resurrected, what does it mean? Why do we have this sense that I don't believe in God, but yet I miss him? There's something there. For Elizabeth, God doesn't seem to exist. There's nothing here. But she showed up for cheap pizza and loud music. What is it beneath the surface? What is the question behind the question? What is it about this crucified prophet rabbi in a small corner of the Roman empire, who 2000 years ago changed the course of history and has caused groups like you and me here over the course of the world,

millions of people gathering today to say he is risen, he is risen indeed! What if something is there? What if that gave meaning to something beyond the purely material world?

We're not going to start with the resurrection of Jesus, but a different resurrection. We'll get to the resurrection of Jesus for sure, but we're going to begin with the resurrection of one of Jesus' friends, Lazarus. As you turn there, let me bring you up to speed. Earlier in the chapter, Jesus had been made aware of his good friend Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary. They went to Jesus because Lazarus was dying and they wanted him to be there, hopefully to intervene.

So they go off to go get Jesus, but he arrives a little bit later. What we see in the scene that he arrives at is essentially a first-century funeral. Lots of mourning, lots of grief, lots of questions, even some accusations. Let's pick up in John 11:17.

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. vv. 17-19

Notice that the author makes this little passing comment about Lazarus being dead for four days. Now, that's an odd number. It's an even number, but you know what I mean. It's a unique contribution to the text. So why four days? Well, it was believed in the first century that the soul would depart from the body on day three. So this is the author's way of saying Lazarus is really dead! He's like super dead. He's dead beyond a shadow of a doubt. Like blood is not pumping, air is not filling the lungs, and the body is growing cold. The body's beginning to actually stink if you read the text.

Jesus arrives on the scene and it's what you would imagine. Mary and Martha are mourning, and the town and the community have gathered to try to offer their condolences and their care. Let's read the scene further.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." vv. 20-22

So, the first sister hears of Jesus arriving and runs out to him. She is running to meet Jesus face to face and there's a bit of an accusatory tone. "If you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." It's spoken from a place of angst, hurt, and pain. "I am suffering, my brother's dead. And Jesus, I know you would have had the ability to have rerouted all of this. If you were here, my brother would not have died." But notice the faith in her words as well. "But even now, God will give you whatever you ask."

What Martha understood is that she still had faith in Jesus. She still had this conviction that Jesus could ask of God and God

could change things. *“Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day’”* (vv. 23-24). There's a bit of a back story you have to understand on this exchange. The biblical hope in the first century was that at the end of all time, everyone would be resurrected, brought before God, and you would either enter into eternal life with God or eternal death in separation. So when Jesus says, your brother will rise again, Martha said, “I know, I've studied the Bible.” But notice that theological certainty for Martha does not calm or quell the grief that's beneath the surface.

We've been there, haven't we? We have felt the sting of sin and death and brokenness. We have felt the effects of a fallen world. And even though we may hold to that truth and know that Jesus will make all things right at the end of time, it still doesn't quell the ache, the pain that we experience. Theological certainty does not numb the ache and the pain that we have. But Jesus says, your brother will rise again. And I know that in the resurrection at the last day, he will. *“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?’”* (vv. 25-26).

I love this response from Jesus because Jesus meets Martha in her accusation and her pain. He says that the hope you have of that resurrection—I am the resurrection and the life.

This phrase “I am” is important to an astute biblical reader. It'll take you back to Genesis, in which God reveals himself to Moses, and Moses says, “Who are you, God? What is your name?” God responds with, “I am who I am,” which is his way of saying that his name is I am. When you're God, you can say that! Jesus is drawing our attention back to that. When he says his name is I am, he's saying the God from the Old Testament, that God is the foundation of our hope. I am that God. But it's not just that he's saying that I am that God. It's the hope that we have, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

One of the things that Martha couldn't have fathomed is that the hope she held, the very foundation on which she stood on, had come so close. She couldn't imagine it—I am the resurrection and the life. Now, on another note, remember that this is happening in John 11. Jesus' resurrection, the Easter hope, doesn't happen until around John 20 and beyond. So when he says the resurrection, he's not drawing back on that Easter moment. He is saying that I am the resurrection and the life, not I will be the resurrection and the life.

The importance of that little nuance is that Jesus is saying the life I have on offer for you, that hope that you have in the future, has come into the present, and you can live into that hope now. Most of us have bought the myth that this whole resurrection thing is about some future reality, but for Jesus and Martha, he's saying that it's available now. You can step into and live the eternal life that you long for in this moment.

One of my issues with Barnes's thesis is that he placed the resurrection purely in future terms, that the only thing that mattered was life after death. And he says that if there is no life after death then why do we need this religion thing? But what Barnes misses is that the resurrection has an impact and an import for today and the future. It is both about the future and here in the past.

For Martha, she's bringing these questions now: Is there meaning to life? God, why did you allow my brother to die? If you had been here, he surely wouldn't have died. Jesus' response is that there is hope here and now—I am the resurrection and the life.

Somehow this resurrection and this life that's on offer from Jesus that we can live into here and now gives purpose and meaning to this life. Barnes' logic, the logic that says if this material world is purely the lights go out, we drift into a frozen silence, and the world's just a cosmic hazard, then what do you do with suffering? Does suffering not speak to something beyond the present? If it's just a material world, what do you do with beauty? What do you do with love, joy, suffering, pain, and lament? My hunch is the resurrection gives purpose to all of that because it points to something more. If life is just about the material world in which when you die, you close your eyes, and you're forgotten forever because no one's there to remember you, well, then I don't know how to even categorize that.

But the resurrection actually gives meaning to all of that. It gives meaning to joy, beauty, and hope. And it gives meaning to despair, lament, and pain because all of it signifies something greater than this life. It's pointing to something more, and the resurrection meets Martha right in the midst of her pain and her accusation.

But don't forget there's a second sister. This other sister, Mary, is going to come and she's going to say the exact same thing that Martha said to Jesus, but she's going to do so from a different posture. So when Mary says the same thing as Martha, we should be alert to what's the difference? Why did the writer go through the process of recording both of these instances?

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept.” vv. 32-35

Did you catch the difference? Martha runs to Jesus with her accusation face to face, which is a beautiful thing. To bring those deep questions is what Jesus wants. And Jesus does not reprimand her for coming face to face with him. He welcomes those questions. But Mary comes in a different posture. Mary falls at the feet of Jesus and says, “If you had just been here, my brother would not have died.” It's through weeping, it's through tears

that Mary arrives at the feet of Jesus and says, "Jesus, I know who you are."

And we've been there. We get this. Have you come before God and waved your hand saying, God: Why this pain? Why this suffering? God, if you were here, he or she wouldn't have died. It wouldn't have happened. My brother wouldn't have died. Mary comes in her grief with that same sense that she may theologically have an explanation for what's to happen and who God is, but certainly, it didn't numb the sting of death for her. There must be something more beneath the surface.

Don't miss the fact that Jesus, a few verses earlier, in which he had already said a few times that he would raise Lazarus from the dead. He's not worried about Lazarus. But Jesus weeps. Why is Jesus weeping? I don't think it's because of Lazarus. He was sad about that, but I don't think that's why he wept. He had said multiple times that Lazarus would be raised. Jesus wept because the text says he was deeply moved when he saw Mary weeping and the Jews who'd come along with her.

Jesus is grieved by the state of brokenness and pain in the world. He recognizes the effects and the anguish of sin running rampant into chaos from all of the brokenness, all of the pain that we both perpetuate in the world and that we have done to us. He recognizes just the sheer chaos of what a broken world and its ripple effects. Jesus looks at this scene and weeps. The resurrection and the life weeps.

You see, the resurrection is not some flippant, naive hope. It isn't what Barnes would suggest as some balm to tamp down the existential dread that creeps up on us every once in a while. It doesn't skirt reality. It goes directly into it. It enters into the grief of Mary and weeps along with her. Jesus weeps with you. God, the one who will be resurrected, who will be super dead, but yet life will begin to pulse through his veins again, that God weeps. There's something there for us to remember that we often forget when retreating away.

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 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." vv. 43-44

Now, here's the climax. Notice that the author says Jesus calls out in a loud voice. There are a couple of reasons for that. First, this is another allusion to Genesis. Do you remember the very beginning pages of the scriptures? In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and he said, let there be light and land and animals and night and moon and stars. God speaks life into existence. Jesus, as the resurrection and the life, is taking up that calling, and he is speaking into the very face of death. Speaking and the dead responding is what God always does. Jesus speaks life into dead places and he brings it alive. And so he says in a loud voice for Lazarus to come out, and the dead rises right

there. Lazarus comes up out of the grave, drops his grave clothes, and begins to go to Jesus.

But certainly, the other thing is in John 5, just a few chapters earlier. Jesus was speaking to his disciples and he was teaching them about all these sorts of things. And right in the middle of that teaching, certainly in the forefront of the disciple's minds, is this from John 5.

Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—" John 5:25-29a

This was in the minds of the disciples at the time when Jesus called for Lazarus to come out. Certainly, the disciples watching said, "I remember when he said that the time has come for the dead to hear the voice of God and rise from the grave." But did you notice what Jesus did in that teaching? He says the time has come, but don't be amazed by that. There is coming a time in which all will rise, when all the dead will come out of the grave in response to the voice of the Son of God.

What Jesus does in this teaching and what he carries out in the life of Lazarus is a signpost about what will be true for all of us. Lazarus is a symbol, a sign of what is to come. What we see in Jesus at the end of John is the ultimate sign or what Paul would call the first fruits.

The Resurrection is a Past, Present, and Future Reality.

The Past

It is inarguable that the resurrection, whether you believe Jesus walked out of that tomb or not, was the turning point in human history. We gather with millions around the globe to declare that he is risen; he is risen indeed. You don't have to believe that, but you do have to note that something happened historically that has rerouted the course of history. And it's in that moment, because of what we claim it is, all of history finds its purpose in there. Christianity is of infinite importance or no importance. Both are on the table, but whatever that event was that rerouted the past history, we have to do something with that. It's a past reality, but it's also a present reality.

The Present

Now, the problem with most of us in this idea of the resurrection, the present reality, is that we have been caught or sold this lie that the whole story is about us descending or flying away some glad morning to some heaven over there, disembodied, elsewhere. The problem with that is your imagination has been

shaped more by Michelangelo than the New Testament. It's just not the story. The problem is the Bible does not teach that you will float away some morning. It talks about how that hope is coming here. This is what Jesus says when he comes on the scene. The kingdom of heaven is here. It's available. The invitation is for us to step into that reality here and now.

The story and what resurrection teaches us is that it's not about getting people to heaven; it's about getting heaven into people. It's about the invitation to live in such a way where the eternal life, the one that you long for, the one that Barnes misses, the one that Elizabeth was searching for, that life has come near—I am the resurrection and the life. And when we step into that life, what you find is life in all of its potency, the fullest. You find that resonance that seems to transcend the here and now. And when you find that life, you actually find the life that you want to live into eternity with.

This is the invitation of Jesus. The kingdom of heaven is here. It's available, and you can step into that present reality now. This means if the resurrection is true, it gives meaning to all of those things. It means the joy, the love, the blessing, and the beauty you experience in this life are but a signpost of what's to come. The suffering, pain, lament, and Mary's—if you had been here, Jesus—all of that means that things are not the way they're supposed to be.

If life is just material, it's just the strong that survive, then I don't know what you do with suffering. It just is. But if the resurrection is true, if there is something beyond and suffering is a signpost for a greater reality, it taps into that. It doesn't flippantly negate it or pass by it. It's Jesus meeting you in your grief, lamenting, and the very resurrection in life weeps with you. He sees that pain, and he, too, does not want it to last. Therefore, he has done something about that.

It won't necessarily calm and quell the pain you feel; I'll be forthright about that. But if you know and if you've walked with Jesus, you'll recognize that even in the valley of the shadow of death, the Lord is your shepherd, and he's walking along with you. He, too, has experienced that pain. My hope is that resurrection actually gives meaning and depth to that, not in a flippant way, but in a way that says, I, too, have walked through death.

The Future

So, the resurrection is a past reality. It's a present reality, but of course, it's a future reality. And what we see in the future is what Jesus says to not to be amazed by what's happening right now. The time is coming when all will be resurrected. We will all be lifted out of the grave and enter into eternal life or separation.

It's a sign that something truer is true of the world that's happening. The truest thing about the universe is that God is taking it somewhere. In that same Corinthians 15 passage, Paul would talk about the resurrection as the first fruits of new creation.

Remember, the hope isn't that we fly away some other day and this world explodes, and thank God we're over there. That's not the story. The story is that new creation, the hope that you long for, the life that Barnes misses, that has come near. In the resurrection of Jesus, these first fruits are the first initial sign of what's to come.

This idea of first fruits is an agrarian metaphor. We're not good with those. I spent a few years in Napa, so I have a small taste of it. The first fruits are when that first grape on the vine bursts out, and it is a signpost that says more is to come. So the resurrection of Jesus as the first fruit of new creation and means what's true of Jesus in the resurrection will be true of you and me. His resurrection has come so that those who belong to him can also enter into the new creation. Jesus' resurrection is the first fruits of your resurrection, of the hope that you hold. It is, in fact, a coming reality that one day will be true of us. For those who identify in the death of Jesus, we somehow mysteriously get to identify in the resurrection of Jesus. Philip Yancey said

We exist in a state of contradiction between the Cross and the Resurrection. Surrounded by decay, we nonetheless hope for restoration, a hope that's illuminated by the 'foreglow' of Christ's resurrection. Yancy

Jesus' resurrection is that little light in the dark that shines the foreglow on the resurrection of all things. It is that hope that you hold; it's the hope that haunts Barnes; it's the hope that had brought Elizabeth to at least show up for the bad pizza and the loud music—the foreglow of Christ's resurrection.

I love the question that Jesus responds to Martha with at the end of saying I am the resurrection and the life. It's the question that's before all of us—do you believe this? Maybe Barnes is right. Maybe life is nothing but a cosmic hazard. I don't believe in God, but I miss him. Maybe it's nothing more than a consoling balm that can numb the pain or seem to push down that dread while we wait for our final death and existence. But what if there was something more? What if there was, in fact, a different story, something that transcends the material? It's Jesus meeting Martha in her faith in question. It's Jesus meeting Mary in her grief and lament. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

So, about six to eight months after the first letter, Elizabeth came up to me again after a similar night of bad pizza and terrible jokes and handed me another letter. I didn't have the chance to read it then, but I went back later and read it. What you need to know is part of that gap in that story is as she had expressed her depression and pain and all that she had walked through, we had surrounded her with a team of support. Those much more qualified than I walked with her who knew how to deal with suicidal ideation and brokenness.

After a long year of a team walking with her and pointing to Jesus, reminding her of Jesus and the stories, not being flippant

about her pain, but trying to meet her in there, she penned this letter. She said that she searched and finally found it, for she was not looking hard enough. She found a friend who, even when she was lost and alone, walked with her in her terror. The thoughts of sleep were stopped by one man who loved her, even when all she could do was hate everything she saw. She looks back, and while an icy tear rolls down, she is reminded of the freezing cold nights when tears froze on her face, and she feels alone.

She realized that someone was there holding her even when she cried, even when she screamed and felt like the silence still would scream louder. He was listening to every cry and scream and he was closest then. She now knows if she goes to battle, she's not alone, for she has him on her side. And who can lose with the Creator of the enemies? She looks back and sees all her friends leaving her, but one stays with her through it all. That one knows her fears, weaknesses, flaws, and past and yet still loves her. He loves her through it all. And that's what makes the fight worth it. For the cold night she once knew was gone. The icy snow has melted, and flowers have bloomed, for a new season has started, and he has led her through it all, walking with her every step of the way. And she knows he will be there forever—Elizabeth made new.

Martha runs to Jesus. "If you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." And Mary runs to Jesus and falls at his feet. "If you had been here, Jesus, my brother wouldn't have died." Jesus weeps. Could it be that God is in the business of changing lives? Could it be that there is something to this resurrection? Could it be that if that resurrection is true, then we find that this story is of infinite value, and it reorients and recalibrates everything? Could it be that if that story is, in fact, accurate, the pain, love, joy, hope, loss, and grief all of it finds meaning and purpose because it's all pointing to something beyond, something more, something that we saw when Jesus' heart began to pump again after being dead? Could it be that in that resurrection, we find there is a hope beyond, and that helps us make sense of the human experience?

I'm a little more than convinced that some of the reasons we can't come to embrace the resurrection are less rooted in rationality and explanations. It's rooted more in an inability to see beyond the dull nihilism that life is meaningless, but at our core, we're haunted by it. I don't believe in God, but I miss him. Because we come to recognize that if the resurrection is true, it changes everything. And if the resurrection is true, it means that pain, grief, love, beauty, all of it, you have to do something with it. You can't just numb it away, tuck it away, and allow it just to disappear in a frozen silence.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

If I could be so bold, I would say that despair is easier than hope. Hope requires that we come face to face with some of the core things of who we are. Hope forces us to look at the pain that this life causes for so many. And we have to listen for the voice of Jesus that says, "I am the resurrection and the life." Hope is hard. Hope is difficult, but we're made for it. To close, let me finish with this quote from N. T. Wright. He said,

Made for spirituality, we wallow in introspection. Made for joy, we settle for pleasure. Made for justice, we clamor for vengeance. Made for relationships, we insist on our own way. Made for beauty, we are satisfied with sentiment. But new creation has already begun. The sun has begun to rise. Christians are called to leave behind, in the tomb of Jesus Christ, all that belongs to the brokenness and incompleteness of the present world. That, quite simply, is what it means to be Christian: to follow Jesus Christ into the new world, God's new world, which he has thrown open before us. N. T. Wright

The invitation for you and me this Easter is to follow Jesus into his new world. The resurrection flung the doors open. New creation is here. It is available. It's a hard journey, but it's one that's liberating. It's one your heart longs for. It's the one I believe that Barnes misses. What would it look like for you to step into that resurrection life today?

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