

After Life - Adult SS - Lesson 3: New Creation

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Preacher: Andrew Kueh

[0 : 00] Let's pray before we begin. Lord God, we thank you that we have hope in Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, who is the first fruit from the dead.

! Sense and reality of the hope that we have in Christ. Help us to long for the future, long for Christ's return.

And would we be greatly comforted knowing that Christ has prepared an eternity for us. And in his name we pray. Amen. So if you haven't been here before, in this series of Sunday School, this series is called Afterlife.

And we've been following the journey of a soul. And we've been asking, after the point of death, what happens to us? So we've seen that we don't just stop existing. Death isn't deletion.

There is an afterlife. Something happens after death. And in this series, we're asking, what exactly is that afterlife? And we've seen over the past few weeks that there is an intermediate state.

[1 : 26] So here's the diagram we've been following. So we've got this life right now while we're alive. And then at the point of death, if the earth continues, people still live on earth.

But at the point of death, the soul, something happens to the soul. And this is the intermediate state, the point between death and the return of Christ. And so we've seen that there is an intermediate state, a state of existence between death and the final state.

And the final state is when Christ returns and kind of initiates how eternity will be permanently, forever. And for the believer, that means heaven in soul form.

We go to be with Christ in a realm in creation called heaven. And so the body's left behind, but the soul goes to be with Christ. And for the unbeliever, we saw last week, after death, it means hell.

A real place of punishment in creation. And in the intermediate state, that's in soul form in hell. And then in the final state, it's body and soul in hell.

[2 : 32] And so, if you've noticed, we're missing one piece of the puzzle. We haven't yet touched on the final state for the believer, which is what we come to today.

And so just by way of reminder, we're going to go back to the return of Christ, judgment day, and the build up to that, which is something called the millennium.

So we're going to go back to that. But today, I want us to complete the puzzle of the intermediate and the final state. And there's something important to see here.

And it's my first point. Heaven is not the end. Heaven is not the end. So heaven isn't actually the final state.

But we can often say, oh, yeah, we're going to be in heaven forever. That's kind of maybe the language some people use. Or if you, you know, in film and TV shows, how is eternity pictured?

[3 : 37] It's usually kind of a place called heaven. Maybe it's got clouds. It kind of looks like the sky. Maybe we have wings or maybe we're kind of like ghosts, kind of ghost forms.

And so kind of people's general impression of what eternity will be like is it's basically heaven forever in that final state. But actually, heaven is where the believer goes to be after death.

But heaven is not the end. The souls in heaven, and in fact, all creation is waiting for something, waiting for something to happen. And I want you to find out what that is.

So I want you to break into groups. Look up Romans 8, 18 to 23. And answer these three questions. It's quite quick. I'll give you two minutes.

It will feel very quick. So work quickly. I'll answer those three questions. Thank you.

[5 : 06] Thank you.

Thank you.

Okay, let's try to wrap it up there. How's everyone doing? Try to answer the third question. Okay, what do we have? So first question, what is creation like now, Rico?

I think it's waiting.

What are we waiting for? Paul, did you get to it? Freedom. Freedom, okay. And look at the end of verse 23. We're waiting. What is that freedom? We are waiting for the redemption of our bodies.

[7 : 20] Do we see that? Every Christian alive is waiting for something, waiting for their bodies to be transformed. So our inner self is redeemed right now. Our sins are forgiven. Our hearts are changing. God is doing remarkable things inside of us.

But our body is dying, isn't it? And so we're waiting for the full redemption of body and soul. And so are the saints in heaven.

So think back to our session on heaven. The saints in heaven, but believers in heaven, their souls are made perfect. So there's no more sin, no more pain. They have relief, true relief and joy with Christ right now.

But they don't have their bodies, true relief and joy with Christ right now. And so we and the saints in heaven, we are waiting for the redemption of our bodies.

We are waiting for the resurrection. And this brings me to my second point. The final state is resurrection. So think about how God made us. We are body and soul. So cast your minds back to the Being Human series and to Harry's session as well, the beginning of Afterlife.

[8 : 40] We are body and soul. We are body and soul. We aren't just kind of, we aren't really, really souls. That's who we really are. But we just happen to have bodies for a little bit. We aren't souls trying to escape our body and the soul is the real us. That's the good bit. No. God made us body and soul.

And at the end of day six of creation, what did he see? And what did he say? He said, it is very good. He sees humans, body and soul. And he said, very good. That's the way it should be.

And so we are meant to be, we are designed to be body and soul together. And so we can exist for a while as souls. And we saw that in the intermediate state in heaven for the believer and in hell for the unbeliever.

We can exist as souls in that state. And heaven for the believer, it really is joy and relief and sinless. But it's not the end. It's not the final goal. It's a temporary waiting period until the soul is united to the body.

[9 : 53] And that goes for both the believer and the unbeliever. So look how Jesus talks about the end of this age when he returns and initiates this final state.

John 5. These are the words of Jesus. Do not marvel at this. And Paul in Acts has almost identical words.

There will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. And this idea was in the Old Testament too. Look at Daniel 12.

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. History for everyone, every human being, history is heading somewhere.

Every believer and unbeliever, dead or alive, in heaven or hell, we are all heading toward a resurrection. When Christ returns and every soul will be reunited with their physical, solid, actual bodies.

[11 : 16] And those bodies will be resurrected from the dead. And so look how the confession summarizes it. The confession has been our guide throughout all these Sunday schools.

Look at Article 32.2. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die but be changed. And all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies and none other, although with different qualities.

We'll see what they are in a bit. Which shall be united again to their souls forever. And then Article 3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor the bodies of the just, by his spirit, unto honor and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

So can you see, we are meant to be united body and soul. And that's what the final state will be like for every human being.

Often, we either don't think about any resurrection. Or, if we do, we might only think about the Christian resurrection. But actually, can you see here that there's a double resurrection with two different destinations.

[12 : 35] The unbeliever has a resurrection to judgment. And they are thrown body and soul into hell. Soul punishment in the intermediate state, it's in soul.

But then the final state in hell is body and soul. We saw that last week. But the believer will have a resurrection to everlasting life.

Living forever in our bodies. And so both will have bodies. But both technically alive. No one's deleted, remember that. But hell, it won't be living life.

It will be living destruction. It's no life at all. But the life that we will have will be real, eternal living. And we know this is coming for us. We can be sure that this will be our final state. Because this is Christ's final state. Jesus' final state, that he will be in forever, is a resurrected body.

[13 : 45] And so whatever happens to Christ, we will follow him. So just look at 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians 15. I urge you to read all of 1 Corinthians 15 after this.

It's maybe my favorite chapter in the Bible. It's just glorious. It's all about the resurrection. So look at 20 to 23. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead.

The firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order. Christ the firstfruits. Then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. The language of firstfruits here, it's a farming term.

So the firstfruits is the first fruit of a harvest that kind of shows what the rest of the harvest will be like. So imagine you have a whole harvest of apples in an apple orchard.

[14 : 47] And you take the first ripe one, the first ready one. You gather that in. And you pluck it. You taste that. And you realize, okay, this is amazing.

This is the best crop ever. And now you know with that first fruit, you know the whole rest of the harvest is going to be like that first fruit.

Right? Well, Jesus' resurrection is the first taste, the first example of what we all will be like in the final state.

Or you can think of it like this. You know when a football team comes out onto the pitch and they all walk out of the tunnel into the stadium. And who walks out first?

It's the captain. And you see what he's clothed like. He's in his football kits. He comes out. And you know behind him the rest of the team are all going to look like him.

[15 : 43] They're all going to have that same kit, aren't they? Well, that is like when Christ emerged from the grave. He emerged with a resurrected body and we're all going to follow behind him.

He's our captain leading the way. But what exactly is this resurrection body like? What does it mean to have a resurrection to everlasting life?

What will we look like? What will we be like? Well, if we want to know that, we just need to look ahead to the person who's gone first. We need to look at Jesus' resurrection.

And so I want us to break into groups and do that. I want you to look up these three passages and just answer two questions. What is the same about Jesus? And what is different about Jesus? So I'll give you, again, work quickly.

I'll give you three minutes for this. Thank you.

[17 : 38] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Okay, you should be on the third one by now.

Thank you. Thank you.

[20 : 00] Okay, let's bring it together. Okay, Luke 24. So Jesus appears to the disciples. Matthew Thorne, what was the same, what was different?

I was saying he was in 20 minutes. He was there and he was puzzling over the fact he had nail marks, which would be interesting in hand and he made the nail marks in his hand.

Interesting, yeah. What does that mean for us? I mean, you know, we can kind of ask the question more. What does that mean for us? You know, we have a scar on this side. Do we carry on? That's a very good question.

We'll come to that at the end. Remember to ask that at the end, okay? Yeah. There are a lot of questions.

Yeah, we don't know. But Matthew, you're right there. Do you see Jesus, he was Jesus, right? He even, there was a continuity from pre-resurrection to post-resurrection.

[21 : 03] He had the scars, right? And a key thing to see here, he was physical. So they thought, this is a ghost, right? Right? What are ghosts?

Like, you could pass your hand through a ghost. That's why Jesus says, give me a bit of fish. I'll eat it. I'm physical, right? You can touch me. Because what if a ghost eats fish?

What will happen? It would just drop to the floor, right? So if you're ever spooked out and you're worried if you're seeing a ghost, keep a can of tuna by your bed. Give him some fish.

Then you know if it's a ghost or not, right? But a key thing here, it is Jesus, and he's physical, right? He's touchable. How about John 20 with Mary Magdalene?

Chris Kitchen. We were just talking about why is it that Mary couldn't identify him right away.

[22 : 06] He's there again in bodily form. Of course, he says, don't cling to me. I have not yet seen him. So there's also an implication there of having a resurrected body, someone to be touched.

Right, exactly. Yeah. So physically there in front of her. Yeah. And yet something about him is perhaps different. Yeah. Maybe less easy to identify.

Yeah. You're absolutely spot on there, right? So let's look at the same. He is physical. She can cling to him. Right. But there seems to be something different. There is some sort of difference.

She can't quite recognise him at first. But she does recognise him because as soon as he speaks, that's the voice of Jesus, right? There is a difference.

He's the same but different. How about John 20? This is with Thomas. Dad. Go on. Did you get that?

[23 : 06] Yeah. And he was the same in that he wore the scar and in fact he asked Thomas to touch him. Yeah. But he was different in that he said the door was locked and he didn't exist in the pier.

Oh, interesting. Yeah. Yeah. So let's first stick with the same, okay? So he has the scars. It's his body. It's not like a different, you know, that old body gets deleted.

Right, I'm just going to build a new one now and it's, you know, completely fresh. No, it's the same body. There's continuity. And remember that they can touch him.

But there is a difference. First of all, he's alive. He's not in pain anymore. You know, he's not crying out in agony on the cross. And also, yeah, about the doors are locked but he seems to be able to do something.

He's interacting with this world in a different way. And I think the best way to understand that it's not that he is like a ghost and he can pass through the door.

[24 : 11] He's not less real than this creation. Like a ghost would be a bit less real. He's more real than this creation. Yeah.

We don't know exactly how it works, like what exactly happened, but he's interacting with this world differently. And so, Jesus was the same but different in his resurrection.

And if this is like Jesus, this will be like all of us in Christ. We will be the same person. It will be our bodies, our physical bodies. But the difference is we will be gloriously better.

The apostle Paul compares this difference to a seed and a flower. So have a look at 1 Corinthians 15. So it is with the resurrection of the dead.

What is sown like a seed, sown into the ground is perishable. What is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour. It is raised in glory.

[25 : 13] It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. Our current bodies will go into the grave like seeds going into the ground. But like a seed transforms into something far more glorious, to a stunning flower.

Just like that, we will be raised as glorious, stunning versions of ourselves. And so the seed and the flower, they have the same identity, don't they?

But it's just been transformed into something even greater. And so what will that mean for our bodies? Well, look at 1 Corinthians 15. We will be imperishable.

Our resurrection bodies cannot hurt or be damaged or wear away or break or get injured. There will be no joint problems, ligament problems, no cuts, no diseases, no chronic illnesses, no cancer, no blindness, no wheelchairs, no walking sticks, no mental health issues.

All that will be an impossibility. It's not that we'll be raised like that, but then maybe we can get it later on. No, no, no. It will be like that forever, an impossibility.

[26 : 30] We will literally be indestructible. And look again, we will be glorious. There'll be nothing dishonourable about our bodies, nothing lowly or less than it should be.

This means wonderfully, no sin. We will be utterly sinless. I've said this once, and I'll say it a million times again. When we wake up in the resurrection, we will have this very strange, but wonderful

new feeling.

We will realise, whoa, I can't sin. There's no sin in me, and I don't want to do it and I can't even do it. But we will be utterly glorious, perfectly reflecting God's glory in all that we are. And we'll be full of power, never tired or failing or weary or ageing.

And we don't know all the details of how this works, but we don't know how the physics and the biology will work in these bodies. If you brush up against something sharp, will you get cut?

[27 : 42] Why not? We just don't know those details, but we need to realise that this is true. And it's what we're all longing for, isn't it? With every ache and injury and loss, we're all longing for this.

And all this means, death will be no more in our bodies. We will be immortal. So just look at 1 Corinthians 15. Again, one of my favourite chapters.

This is a peak into the final state, verses 51 to 55. This is what will happen when Christ returns.

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep.

We're not all just going to be in the ground, unconscious. But we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed.

For this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the same that is written.

[28 : 52] Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh death, where is your victory? Oh death, where is your sting? We saw in the first week with Harry, death is not normal, is it?

It's a great evil in our creation. We know death is not right. When we're standing at that graveside, crying, we're not just saying, yeah, this is a normal part of the biological process.

We're saying this is not right. Our bodies were not intended to die. And so on the final day, Christ will vanquish death.

Our bodies will never, ever experience death. And we will have painless, perfect, powerful, never-ending, everlasting life in our bodies.

Literally living forever in our bodies. And this is what Christ has won for us when he left that tomb.

And he's promised we are going to follow him.

[29 : 59] And so this is the final state for every believer, everyone in Christ. But there's a lingering question. Where is all this taking place?

If we're going to have physical, three-dimensional bodies, surely that means all this needs to be taking place in a physical, three-dimensional location.

creation. And the answer is, yes, we will live on the new creation. And this is my final point today, and we'll do questions at the end.

The final state is the new creation. The final state is the new creation. So, Romans 8, cast your mind back to Romans 8 at the beginning. We said, we're all waiting for something.

We're waiting for the redemption of our bodies. But look, I've got it printed out there again. Creation is waiting for something too. It's waiting to be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

[31 : 07] Creation, right now, it's subjected to futility. It's failing and broken. It's corrupt. It's corrupt with sin and evil and all sorts of misery.

And so creation itself, it's waiting to be set free from that. This world, this universe is waiting to be perfect. Like our bodies, it wasn't intended to be like this.

And like our bodies, it's waiting to be made new. And so the final state for the believer, we will exist on what is called the new heavens and the new earth.

To sum it up a little bit more in a shorter term, we will live on the new creation. creation. So look at 2 Peter 3. We are waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn.

But according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. The language of fire here, it doesn't mean incineration or deletion, remember?

[32 : 27] There's no deletion. The fire here means purified. So when the Lord comes, all creation will be purified of all its corruption and there will be a new heavens and a new earth, a renewed creation.

Now, this isn't a brand new creation. It won't be like God is deleting this planet and then he's just going to start from scratch a new one and then plonk us on it.

No, this is renewed. So just like our bodies, it will be the same but glorified. That's why in Romans 8, I'd encourage you to read it again, that's why in Romans 8, you'll see that creation, it's longing for the resurrection, our resurrection, it's like planet earth is crying out right now, like hurry up church, come on, be resurrected, I want to join you in, join you with it.

I want a resurrection too, like that's what the planet is crying out. And so it will be this planet, this universe but transformed, a physical planet with our physical resurrected bodies, we'll be walking around on it, looking around but we'll be able to run and jump and climb trees and explore creation, it will be a physical planet, physical creation with physical bodies.

And so, because there won't be any corruption, that means no hurricanes, no floods, no earthquakes, no diseases, no viruses, no, instead it will be filled with righteousness, a sinless creation, an evilness creation.

[34 : 13] And so, think of it like this, there'll be two things you won't see in the new creation. There won't be any hospitals, there's no need of them, and there won't be any locks, there won't be any keys or locks, we handle keys and locks every day, but there won't be any of that, no one's stealing anything.

And a critical, a key passage that gives us a wonderful picture of this is Revelation 21. I just want us to read it, this is just glorious, I'm choosing, these are all my favourite passages today.

This is what is waiting for us, this is a peek into the final state, Revelation 21. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

[35 : 41] Just two quick things to see from this. Creation will be perfect. It says the former things will pass away. That's talking about all the bad things to do with this world.

It will be gone. And any reason that you have to mourn or cry or any pain that you feel in your body or in your heart, it will be no more.

Because God will wipe away all your tears. He will take away any reason to cry ever again. And to top it off, this will be a reunion.

every person that dies in Christ, every saint throughout history, all our loved ones in Christ, we will see again.

We will be with them bodily again here on earth and we will never be separated. But the next thing, the new creation will be heaven on earth.

[36 : 45] This is the most important and this is the best thing about the new creation. Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God.

God will be with us on this new earth, this new creation. But we are made to be with God, to walk with him, to see him, to be with him and that's when we are truly happy, truly human and in the new creation the Lord Jesus Christ will come down from heaven and he will dwell with us.

We will be face to face with God in the person of Jesus Christ and we will actually live on this planet with Jesus Christ forever. And so it's just something to see here.

Think back to the session on heaven. Heaven is where God especially dwells, isn't it? That's where his glorious concentrated presence is. Well look here, that will be on earth.

God will dwell on earth. And so the boundary of heaven and earth, it's going to be blurred. The two will become one.

[38 : 08] It will be heaven on earth. And what happens in heaven? Worship. Which is what we will be doing. Revelation 7.

After this I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothes in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to

our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

We will be worshipping God perfectly in the new creation. He will get the praise that he deserves. Now we will likely be doing other things as well as this.

Creation will be restored. Our dominion will be restored. Right now we don't have dominion over the earth but one day we will. The earth will be ours to enjoy.

The Bible speaks of us inheriting earth. The meek shall inherit the earth. So likely this is kind of a little bit speculation but there's biblical grounds for saying this.

[39 : 18] We're likely to explore creation, play sports and catch up and laugh and maybe build a farm.

My brother-in-law I think I've said this before my brother-in-law he wants to own a vineyard in the new creation so come to my brother-in-law Ben and we can have a glass of wine together at his place.

But we're not entirely sure what it will look like but there is good reason to think our dominion is going to be restored because creation is restored. The order is restored and we're going to inherit this place but we will be worshipping God giving him the praise we deserve and all this will be forever.

There's no end to this and we're not going to get bored because every day day after day we will just get to discover more and more of God's creation more and more of each other more and more of God's glory and that's never ending that's never stale and so Christian I want you to hear this today that this is our destiny this is what Christ has secured for us and if there's one thing that you get from this today I want you to do this I want you to hope and long for the new creation that this world is frustrating this world isn't our home but one day it will be and it's going to be even better than you think I'll stop there we've got time for questions Matthew I'll do your question so we're going to have restored bodies imperishable no pain no cuts no bleeding none of that why did

Christ have his scars think back to what our bodies will be like they will be glorious what is Christ's glory it's the cross and so those scars yes they're a product of pain but actually after that they are a sign of glory they are glorious and so when we're praising him in the new creation maybe we will see those scars and that will be all the more praise to glorify God and so yeah again we don't know all the details but yeah it could well be that Christ is unique in this sense because they're his scars of glory so that that and I was like, I don't know how to answer that.

[42 : 25] Yeah. So the answer was not convenient, but it just, is that, I don't know, appropriate and kind of like, yeah, yeah, yeah. Will we all be like Calvin Klein models?

Yeah. So, again, we don't know all the details, but let's try to go with what we have right here. Jesus still looked like Jesus, right?

They did ultimately recognize him. And so he wasn't, like, we will look like us. And, yeah, with regard to our weight, yeah, I don't look, we're going to be healthy.

Yeah. So, yeah, I don't know about that. But we won't look in the mirror and be like, I wish I was something else. We won't be, a lot of the dissatisfaction we have with our bodies and our looks, like, it comes from a, yeah, not an appreciation of what God has given us.

It does come from kind of a lot of sin of thinking what others care and not God. So, but that will all be gone. So, yeah. And the way we see others won't be judgmental in that way either.

[43 : 36] All the sin is gone. So everyone will be, in that sense, yeah, beautiful. Like, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, Moses. But we have knowledge of sin in the new creation.

Yeah. Good question. So, I think it's Isaiah 65, was it, or Revelation 21. It speaks of not remembering the things that passed, so the former things have passed away and so will the memory of them.

So, it could well be that, yeah, the memories of sin that we have, yeah, maybe they will fade away. But there won't be a complete, there can't be a complete forgetfulness of all that has happened. It's not like, who's this guy, Jesus? Oh, what's this cross all about?

Oh, was there something called sin? Like, yeah. Like, it can't be that because we'll be praising the lamb who was slain. So, there'll be a recognition of all that's happened in history, redemption, but it will be like a transformed memory of it, yeah.

[44 : 47] Again, we don't know the detail, we're just trying to piece together that, yeah. It's a good question, though. What about the scars? The scars.

Oh, sorry, yeah, I'll give you more detail, but basically, those scars are Christ's glory, so we're going to be glorious, so Christ's scars are his glory, and so, it's no surprise that we still have them.

Will we have scars, you know, if you've cut your leg badly in a car accident and you've got a scar? Probably not. You know, we're going to be renewed.

Yeah, but I'll chat to you more afterwards, yeah. Let me close there. If you've got more questions, come to me afterwards. Let me pray. Lord God, we praise you that we have a wonderful, a glorious inheritance, an imperishable inheritance.

The redemption of our bodies is coming, the new creation is coming, and Lord, we thank you for that hope. We thank you that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and that we will follow him.

[46 : 06] And we know all this is coming for those who are in Christ when he returns, and we long for it. We're waiting for it, and so we pray, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.