

Resurrection of the Body By Ed Knippers

The human body is at the center of my artistic imagination because the body is an essential element in the Christian doctrines of Creation, Incarnation and Resurrection.

Disembodiment is not an option for the Christian. Christ places His Body and His Blood at the heart of our faith in Him. Our faith comes to naught if the Incarnation was not accomplished in actual time and space—if God did not send His Son to us in a real body with real blood.

Heresy results when we try to minimize the presence or preeminence of the body and the blood. Yet even believers have become comfortable with our age as it tries to disembody reality. Physicality is messy: it is demanding and always a challenge to control. In the name of progress, our communication is increasingly becoming a disembodied voice on the line or virtual image on a screen. We move human interaction, even consciousness, from the real into a virtual realm. When we must deal with the physicality of the real world, it is uncomfortable.

The response to this discomfort is twofold. Some resort to worshipping the physical creation as seen in contemporary sexual idolatry, including pornography and other sexual exploitation, or in the resurgence of pagan creation-centered religions. Others resort to a kind of Gnosticism, prudishly rejecting the physical creation's importance and disdaining as evil what God Himself called 'good.' Neither response is Christian.

The body (both Christ's and ours) is a mystery. Our physical being is not to be worshipped or disregarded. His is to be both worshipped and glorified. As orthodox Christians we insist on the bodily resurrection for both Christ ("...if Christ be not risen... your faith is also vain." Corinthians 15:14) and, just as scandalously, for ourselves ("...he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus..." II Corinthians 4:14).

We Christians believe that God paid the ultimate price for our redemption. That would not be true if He had given us only His mind (and thus been merely a great teacher), or only His healing (a great physician), or even only His love (a compassionate friend). Without His Body broken for us, His sacrifice would be incomplete and we would be lost. For without the broken body there can be no redemptive resurrection.

Have a body is a prerequisite for being human. For us, as inconvenient as this fact can be, it is a constant reminder that we are human and not God—that we are a part of the created order. Yet even as part of creation we are able to make our bodies a living sacrifice to God because of Christ's real and complete sacrifice for us. In thus offering our bodies, we not only show our hope in the world to come, but even now we can taste the Glory of His Body and His Blood—we can truly live before we die.