

SUNDAY ARTICLE

ST DAVID'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ♦ 17 JUNE 2018



Running to the Resurrection

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I've been running since second grade. I love pushing my body farther distances at faster speeds. My legs move in rhythm to my music. My lungs fill with air. My eyes survey nature's artistry. Endorphins cause a smile to form on my sweaty face. I'm sure I'm running slow as a turtle, but the steady pavement-pounding of my feet makes me feel like I'm flying. I'm free.

In 2011 I developed Iliotibial Band Syndrome (ITBS), which makes the outside of my left knee and hip shoot with pain if I run too fast or far. The pain sometimes flares up when I'm sitting, standing, or lying in bed. It used to keep me from running for months at a time, but I'm now able to run weekly (though slowly and for much shorter distances) with the help of my sports therapist.

I'm thankful to run while I still can, because I know one day my aging body won't be able to. Well, that's not entirely true. I *will* be able to run in the future. And I'll be faster, stronger, and no longer constricted by ITBS.

This is just one of the many benefits of resurrection.

Resurrection Hope

In his book *Heaven*, Randy Alcorn explains that our eternal home as God's children will be the new earth. Heaven itself will descend to earth, making heaven and earth one and the same (Revelation 21:1-4). When all is said and done, God will finally answer the Lord's Prayer: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

We won't be spirits floating around, playing harps on clouds in some ethereal realm. We will live forever with God in glorious, resurrected bodies on a beautiful, rejuvenated earth.

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But this is great news only if we understand the bad news: Sin has negatively affected all that God made "very good" (Genesis 1:31) – humans, animals, the whole earth (Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 5:12; 8:20). We suffer and die (Genesis 3:16-22; 1 Corinthians 15:56). The earth births thorns

and natural catastrophes (Genesis 3:17-18). Worst of all, our sin alienates us from God and earns us his judgment (Romans 3:10-20).

But God will not simply throw away his marred masterpiece – our bodies, the earth, the universe. Instead, he will restore, renew, and resurrect it to be even more glorious than before sin entered into the picture (Romans 8:18-25; Ephesians 3:7-10).

God is accomplishing this great mission through his Son Jesus as "a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things

on earth” (Ephesians 1:10; cf. Colossians 1:19-20). Jesus – the resurrection and the life (John 11:25) – lived a morally spotless life in our place and laid his life down as a payment for our sins (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6; Isaiah 53). Then he rose, defeating our sin and securing for us our own resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). All who trust in Jesus are given the precious promise of “the resurrection of life” (John 5:29), which among many wonderful things includes “the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:23).

Resurrection Glory

Can you imagine worshiping God without any sin in your heart? Living in perfectly harmonious fellowship with people? Always enjoying your work? Exercising the ever-increasing capacities of your mind and body without any hindrance or handicap? These are yours at the resurrection.

Even more, our pains are “preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17). The resurrection won’t simply balance the scales of our suffering; it will break those scales with glory immeasurable. No wonder our present pains are “not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18; cf. Romans 8:28).

So my sin struggles, persecution, relational tensions, health issues – even my ITBS – are all working for me as servants for my eternal joy. In my resurrection body I’ll look back and say, “Those pains were more than worth it. My scars are now my trophies. Worthy are you, O Lord!”

Resurrection Body

Alcorn states:

Inside your body, even if it is failing, is the blueprint for your resurrection body. You may not

be satisfied with your current body or mind – but you’ll be thrilled with your resurrection upgrades. With them you’ll be better able to serve and glorify God and enjoy an eternity of wonders he has prepared for you.

I imagine running on the new earth, inhaling unpolluted, crisp air. I imagine pristine blue skies, the vibrant colours of nature surrounding me. I imagine my feet bouncing in rhythm with a flawless heartbeat. And no ITBS to ever hinder my strides. I imagine my soul bursting with worship to the God who made me to run for his pleasure.

When I glimpse that joy as I run here and now, I worship Christ for the sweet foretaste of resurrection existence. When I feel the pangs of ITBS, sickness, or injury here and now, I worship Christ because these bitter afflictions will only make for a sweeter resurrection.

Either way, I’m so ready for my upgrades.

My bitter afflictions will only make for a sweeter resurrection.



Quina Aragon is a wife, mother, and artist who enjoys copyediting, creating spoken-word videos, and writing for her personal blog quinaaragon.com.

Source: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/running-to-resurrection/>

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