

# 3. Resurrection Imagined: The Christian Life

## Living the risen life as an act of imagination

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*Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16–18)*

### 1. Dangers to Faith from the Imagination?

#### (i) Sceptics' Glee: confirming every prejudice?

*'Believing something you know isn't true' = **delusional***

#### (ii) Pastors' Fears: imagining without constraint?

*'Believing something because you'd love it to be true' = **fantasist***

### 2. The Importance to Faith of the Imagination

#### (i) A Biblical Imagination

*Heb 11:1-2 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. <sup>2</sup> This is what the ancients were commended for.*

## (ii) A Reasonable Imagination

CS Lewis

For me, reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning. Imagination, producing new metaphors or revivifying old, is not the cause of truth, but its condition.<sup>1</sup>

- *Reason* >> *what is*
- *Imagination* >> *so what*

## (iii) An Essential Imagination

◆ **Wish Fulfilment**

◆ **Invention**

◆ **Perception of deep reality**

## 3. A Life of Faithful Imagination

*Christian faith: 'confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see' (Hebrews 11:1)*

- **The deep past**
- **The invisible present**
- **The eternal future**

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Literary Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 265

## Our Present Identity & Nature

### (i) Living Buildings

*<sup>16</sup> Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives among you? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. (1 Co 3:16-17)*

*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*

*But the temple he had spoken of was his body. <sup>22</sup> After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. Jn 2:21-22.*

	Worldly/External Experience	Spiritual/Internal Reality
Living Buildings		

### (ii) Living Letters

*You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Corinthians 3:2-3)*

	Worldly/External Experience	Spiritual/Internal Reality
Living Letters		




**(iii) Living Ambassadors**

*We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:20–1)*




	Worldly/External Experience	Spiritual/Internal Reality
<b>Living Ambassadors</b>		

**Further Reading** (all recommended, arranged by weight!)

***Did it all really happen?***

	Rebecca McLaughlin	<b>Is Easter Unbelievable?</b>	Good Book 2023	<i>Up to date, brief and very readable.</i>
	John Dickson	<b>Is Jesus History?</b>	Good Book 2019	<i>Accessible overview of the historicity of Jesus by a scholar of the classical world</i>
	Michael Licona	<b>The Resurrection of Jesus</b>	Apollos 2010	<i>A doorstep (643 pages!) but brilliant for going in deep</i>

***What does it all mean?***

	Mark Meynell	<b>Life after Life</b>	IVP 2024	<i>What can I say?! Not too bad...</i>
	Tom Wright	<b>Surprised by Hope</b>	SPCK 2011	<i>Thought-provoking, very readable and life-changing</i>
	John Stott	<b>The Incomparable Christ</b>	IVP 2001	<i>A rich feast looking at all kinds of different aspects of who Jesus is and the revolution he brings</i>