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Pinocchio and the Resurrection

Jesus' resurrection is often explained in terms of his Divinity. His resurrection is taken to be a kind of final miracle that proves his innocence and demonstrates to everyone how much we should listen to him.

The reasoning tends to go something like this: Since the Son of God can't stay dead, when Jesus rose it proved that he really was the Son of God. So, when we look at his resurrection we'd better take warning: it proves he really was the Son of God so you'd better listen to him and do what he says!

All that's true, in as far as it goes. However, as with so much of the gospel, the complete picture is lost by neglecting Jesus' humanity when trying to work out what is happening. Jesus himself is the good news that we call "the gospel". He is the gospel because he is fully God and fully human. That means that he is the union of Divinity and humanity, the union of the Trinity with the human race. And that is good news for us! When we look at Jesus we see that we are with God and God is with us; there is no separation.

Therefore, whatever we look at about Jesus' life - including the resurrection - we need to see how his humanity explains the event as much as his Divinity explains it. The resurrection is way more than Jesus just proving that he is God the Son by getting up after a hard day's work and heading home.

To think more fully about the resurrection we might do well to start by thinking about the Father's purpose for humanity. Scripture tells us that the Father created us so that he could adopt us as his children in Jesus (Eph. 1:5). The Father did not create us so that he would have some people to save from sin. He created us so that others could share in the joy, love, and peace of the life he has always had with the Son in their Spirit.

This purpose and plan raises an immediate question: how can creatures become children of their creator? That was Pinocchio's dilemma, if you recall. He was a puppet, but he and Geppetto wanted him to be a real boy and be Geppetto's son.

Like created puppets that want to be real boys, we have to ask how can we mere creatures love, live, and even dance together in the Divine dance of the Trinity? Of ourselves and on our own it is impossible. Various religions and philosophies have tried to do it by human work over the years and all have failed.

The only way we will ever be able to really be children of the Father is if the only Son of the Father – the second person of the Trinity – shares with us the Father/Child relationship that he has always had with the Father. We cannot ever, by our effort, make ourselves into children, but the Father can give us that relationship by giving us his Son and pouring out their Spirit on us.

That is the primary purpose for which the Son of God became flesh and made his permanent dwelling with us – to accomplish the plan of adoption by sharing with us his Father/Child relationship with the Father in the Spirit. His secondary purpose in coming was to deal with our

fallen, sinful nature and put to death that nature. However, this secondary purpose is created by the primary purpose, however. In other words, the Father's plan of adoption would be frustrated by our sin because our sin would forever blind us to the adoption accomplished by the Son becoming one of us. So, the Son comes into our humanity to make us children of the Father and to heal our blindness so that we might see, believe, and enjoy this relationship we've been given.

So, we see the bigger picture of the Son's mission: to make us children of the Father. One part of the dilemma of creatures becoming children is the nature of our bodies. Pinocchio also struggled with this dilemma, being made of wood as he was. He could hardly be Geppetto's son if he continued to have a wooden head.

Our bodies are corruptible and mortal but true children of the Father must be incorruptible and immortal. How can mortal creatures become immortal children? The only immortal Son – the second person of the Trinity – must share with our corruptible human nature his incorruptible immortality.

And this is exactly what he did in his resurrection as the man Jesus. When the Son of God rises in the immortal, incorruptible body of his resurrection (Luke 24:39), he transforms the nature and destiny of the human body and resurrects our humanity in his resurrection.

By doing this he makes it possible for us to live forever, not as corruptible creatures, but as incorruptible children. In Jesus the Father is thus bringing many children to glory (Heb. 2:10).

So Jesus' resurrection serves at least three purposes (and probably more if we take time to think about it). In order of relevance to the fulfillment of the Father's plan of adoption, I would say those three purposes are:

1. To raise humanity up as an immortal body in which we may be full children of the Father.
2. To transform our fallen, sinful humanity into glorified humanity which is capable of relating to the Father without the blindness of sin.
3. To prove that Jesus really is the Son of God and Son of Man.

May this coming Easter season be a celebration in your life of all the goodness that comes from our Father in the immortality of his Son Jesus Christ!

~ Jonathan Stepp