

Dear Friends in Christ:

If we were to sit in our fallenness and imagine a God who chose to give us a future beyond death, we might come up with Valhalla. It is the place where Old Norse warriors who were killed in battle hang out until Ragnarok when they go forth for the final battle that destroys everything. In the meantime there is lots of drinking and fighting and wenching and drinking.

That vision would not work for everyone. There is always the Hallmark Channel. How about a future where every day is a new adventure in Romance, Misunderstanding, Moving back to New York, Wise old washed up actors giving sage advice, and then Showing Up Just in Time for the Best Christmas Program Ever.

We might come up with the Elysian Fields. In ancient Greek and Roman thought, it is where the heroic and virtuous have their final resting place. It is an idyllic, garden-based assisted living where the Valium never runs out. Think the Villages without the golf carts and swinging.

If we are influenced by the drug culture of Rock and Roll, we might think of Puff the Magic Dragon, Purple Haze, Strawberry Fields Forever, or being Rocketman. I think it's gonna be a long, long time.

If we are from Generation Z, we might come up with Dave and Buster's. We could all play video games and eat fried food and pizza all day every day—forever.

I personally might come up with my own private ski area with no crowds, no ski patrol, and a bathroom every 200 yards because I am on Lasix.

All of these are freeze-frame visions. That is to say that if some area or time of our lives seems pretty nice to us, we are inclined to wish that God would make that happen again and again like Groundhog Day—after we enter into life after death.

Here is the problem: I am going to bring my selfish, sinful attitudes and behaviors along with me into that freeze-frame life, and so are you. For those of you that want the warm climes and tropical beaches of Spring Break Forever—too bad. *We're skiing here!*

Resurrection has only happened to Jesus. His life is the only life in the World to Come so far. His earthly life which was focused on the coming of his Father's Kingdom and the doing of his Father's will is the only clue we have as to what life is like in the World to Come. In fact, as Christians use the term, *resurrection* is shorthand for participation in

the resurrected life of Jesus Christ in the World to Come. I am merely a participant. I do not set the agenda. I do not define good and evil. I should not expect God to cater to my whims, desires, appetites, and imaginings. Neither should you. We will learn how to be human all over again as we learn to live in Good's kingdom of justice and truth; of faith, hope, and charity; of righteousness and peace. It will be *life as it should be*, but it will not be life as I always thought it should be. The vain imaginings of even our best moments are nothing to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us and the fulfillment of our lives in the Resurrection of the Dead and the life of the World to Come.

Yours in Christ,

John Shepherd McKenzie