Easter, resurrection, creation, humanity, body, God's image, temple
Romans 8:22-25
Human resurrection in Christ is the hope of the whole created universe.

INTRODUCTION: (text as Scripture reading)

The bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ was not just a local event on
Planet Earth. It was a cosmic event that reverberated throughout all
of physical and spiritual creation. Yes, Easter celebration is especially full
of hope for us: "Hope beckons to a death-bound human race from the open
doorway of Christ's empty tomb." BUT our hope is not ours alone.

–HOM.idea. Rom 8:19. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of
God to be revealed. What is creation anticipating? What is it waiting for?
What is this "eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed"? The answer
is in what we, too, are waiting for: Rom 8:23b-24a, we wait eagerly for our
adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.

–Why is our human hope, this "redemption of our bodies" in resurrection,
so connected to the rest of creation? Well, one reason is that....

I. Creation is Waiting for God's Human Temple

A. What did Jesus say about His body?– John 2:19,21. Jesus answered
them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” ... But the
temple he had spoken of was his body.

1. Poets often exalt nature as a temple, a sanctuary of retreat from
the chaotic world of humanity. But nature has just the opposite
idea: it longs for a human temple in which its Creator dwells.

2. A temple is made from earthly materials as a place to meet with
and worship the God who is beyond this world. The Tabernacle
in the OT was the first structure that served this purpose.

3. Notice how Christ's Incarnation is described in John 1:14. The Word
became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the
glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
["made his dwelling" is literally "tabernacled" or "pitched his tent"]

4. BUT, although Christ, the Word, was God and Creator of all
things, when He first showed up, creation didn't recognize Him–
John 1:10. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him,
the world did not recognize him. ("the world," the cosmos, could not
recognize its Maker in His earthly temple until that temple was
manifested in the Resurrection, when He broke death's chains.
Creation had to hear this Gospel– Col 1:23b, ...This is the gospel that
you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven...).

B. Our bodies are also temples of God – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Do you not
know that your body is a temple 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 honor God with your body. But creation can't recognize us yet
as these temples. It is waiting for our physical resurrection in
Christ, when the children of God will finally be "revealed."

TRANS: Creation knows its connection to us better than we know ours
with it. We look at nature and say, "God's country!" But creation looks
at us in anticipation of the full restoration of "God's temple." Right now
our temples wear out and die. Creation longs for a permanent human
temple of God. That's why "the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains
of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the
firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons,
the redemption of our bodies." Our resurrection in Christ is the hope of
all creation, because it restores God's temple to the created order.

II. Creation is Waiting for God's Human Image

A. God created us in His image as more than an artistic Self-portrait.
He was establishing a new order of being in the universe, one that was
a unity of both the spiritual and physical realms, a body-spirit
being that would look and act like the Creator:

1. Man was a visible bodily image of God. He was God's handmade
representative to lead creation under direct, divine guidance.

2. When humans fed on a "knowledge of right and wrong" that gave us
moral independence from God, our cosmic leadership role was
sabotaged. God's physical image was still visible, but our human
spirit became disconnected from the Source of spiritual life.

B. The 2nd Member of the Trinity became one of us in Jesus Christ,
to restore that human image of God to the created order– Col 1:15.
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (This is
Good News not just for us, but for the entire created universe.)

1. Satan tried to stop God's plan for His image back in Eden. Now he
tries to keep lost humans from restoration in Christ– 2 Cor 4:4.
The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot
see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
2. Progress in the Christian life is measured in how much we are being renewed in His image—Col 3:9-10, Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

**TRANS:** A lying fallen angel got Adam & Eve distracted from seeing how they, in their physical bodies, represented their Creator. The first result of sin an attempt to hide those bodies. But truth has not changed. The older I get, the more I appreciate the human body, whether I see it in the hospital or in figurative art. It still displays God's glory, clothed in fig leaves or as naked as the day we were born. Why? Because it still bears His image, is still His holy temple. And it is in this bodily image and from this fleshly temple that God will bring all creation together under one eternal government. This that is why....

**III. Creation is Waiting for God's Human King**

A. Our view of redemption becomes narrow when we get caught up in a Gnostic view that the body and the physical world are basically worthless and unnecessary. BUT...

1. **In Christ's Resurrection,** the dignity and destiny of human body-spirit beings are forever established!

2. Through **His Incarnation,** He used the death of His physical body to reconcile to God not only us, but all things in creation.

3. By bodily **Resurrection,** He established human supremacy over all the universe. This is what transformed the Divine Son of God forever into the Human King of kings and Lord of lords.

B. This is **the Gospel hope:** a gospel preached to all creation, and all creation awaits its fulfillment at Christ's return.

**CONCLUSION:**

—Human resurrection in Christ is the hope of the whole created universe. Easter is the Sunday of Sundays, because every Sunday celebrates Christ's Resurrection. In that celebration of His Resurrection from the dead, we anticipate our own. That's the next event on the schedule of salvation history, and all creation eagerly waits for it.

- "HE IS RISEN!" (response) "HE IS RISEN!" (response) "HE IS RISEN!" (response) And because He is risen, "we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved."

Romans 8:22-25 (NIV)

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.  
23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.  
24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?  
25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.