

---

## *Eternal Life: A Cathedral Response to Bishop Spong*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

Several weeks ago, I promised to resume my presentation, "What is Marriage?" with Part 2 of that material at the Dean's Forum on September 19. I have already reviewed some historical developments of marriage, and I have mentioned some of the weddings and marriages of my own summer (see ['Tis the Season ... for Weddings](#), [What is Marriage?](#), [Dean's Forum podcast](#)).

However, I must now postpone that Forum topic, "What is Marriage: Part 2," in order to review and respond this week to the presentations of Bishop John Shelby Spong. It will be our honor at the Cathedral of St. Philip to host Bishop Spong for two days on September 17 and 18. For an entire generation, he has stimulated and challenged traditional Christian faith, and he has led many to a deeper and more sincere sense of Christianity. He has critics and admirers, and I honor them both. In fact, I will always appreciate his critical and thoughtful challenges.

It is important that we review and respond to his thinking. Thus, the Dean's Forum this Sunday will review some of his latest material, including his presentations here at the Cathedral, and his latest book, "Eternal Life: A New Vision."

Join us! I hope to engage in lively and faithful critical discussion. I hope we can challenge one another, but also encourage one another to deeper faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

My own quick answers begin like this: "Is traditional Christianity dying?" Of course it is. Christianity is always dying, but it is always being reborn, too. We are always carrying about the death of Christ, and I quote two magnificent passages from Paul's Letters to the Corinthians:

*But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:7-11).*

And, one of my favorite verses of all time, "*Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed.*" (1 Corinthians 15:51).

We will not die. But we will be changed. Paul spoke of our individual bodies. But he could as easily been speaking of the Christian Church. Join us this Sunday, and every Sunday, for resurrection power!

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

---

© *The Cathedral of St. Philip. All rights reserved.*