

Opening Words – We have been born again to a living hope. The resurrection of Jesus points away from the corruption in this world and away from the dead-end roads on which so many walk, to a new life, a new way of living, and a new inheritance that will never perish.

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The resurrection of Jesus Christ means so much. Today I want to share the 9th meaning of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

9. The resurrection of Jesus means that we have power for holy living.

The Apostle Paul in Romans 6:4 said this, “We have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

Did you catch the connection between Christ’s resurrection and our new life? “Christ was raised from the dead so that we might walk in newness of life,”

Romans chapter 6 is a classic passage that many have turned to for help in their struggle with sin. Paul begins this great chapter with several questions:

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ² May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

With these questions Paul launches into a reasoned explanation why it is ludicrous to think that God’s complete forgiveness and justification allows us to do whatever we want. Some have thought, “If I am forgiven of all sins, past, present, and future, if I am not under any condemnation, then I can do as I want. Right?”

Wrong! Paul says in this passage, “If this is what you think, then you are missing the point of the Gospel. First, when you were baptized into Christ, you were baptized into His death to sin and into His burial. You died to your identity with guilt and sin and condemnation. If you continue in sin, you are continuing to live in an identity that is no longer yours. If Christ has delivered you from a rat-infested, roach crawling house in which you lived and has bought you a new home that is clean and secure and beautiful, why do you want to go on living in your old home? That doesn’t make sense.

“But listen,” Paul says, “there is more. You not only died and were buried with Christ to sin, but you also rose with Him. Your resurrection with Christ is so that you might have a new life, a new

way of living, in a new home, so to speak, that is clean and wholesome and honoring to God. When Christ died to sin, He died to sin once for all, but when He rose, He rose that He might live forever for the purposes of God to bless the world. In the same way, consider yourself dead to sin and alive to Christ. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting your body to sin; but present yourselves to God as ones alive from the dead, and your bodies to righteousness to God.”

Many look at Romans 6 and think that it is all about the death of Christ and our death with Him to sin, but what many fail to see is that it is just as much about the resurrection of Christ, the new life we have with Him now, and the hope of our future resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that we can now be free to live in a way that men of old could only dream about. Now that Christ has risen and now that Christ has poured out His Spirit upon us we can have our nature changed into the image of Christ and we can bear the fruit of the Spirit of Christ.

This is the reason Paul says in Galatians, “It was for freedom that Christ set us free ... For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another... Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Let’s look at another passage, 1 John 3:2-3. We have referred to this verse many times in our Resurrection Vision series. Here it is again:

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.³ And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Did you catch the last part of this great passage? Those who have this hope of becoming like Jesus, perfectly and completely, will purify themselves as Christ is pure.

There is a law that operates in the universe that says whatever we focus on is what will control us and will shape our character. If we focus on the reality of the risen Christ, His purity, and His holiness, we will move in that direction and it will change our lives. This is how the writer of Hebrews describes Christ in Hebrews 7:26, Christ is “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens,” because He has been raised from the dead. The more we focus on His holy and exalted position, the more we will move in that direction and our lives will change.

Consider with me these verses from 1 and 2 Peter.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

We have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, the resurrection of Jesus gives us new purpose and new hope for our lives. The resurrection of Jesus points away from the corruption in this world and away from the dead-end roads on which so many walk to a new life, a new way of living, and a new inheritance that will never perish, will never be defiled, and will never lose its luster or excitement. Peter says this causes us to have great excitement and joy, even amid trials for we know that our faith is more valuable than gold. Then he talks about our hope again in verse 13. He says:

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

When the resurrected Jesus comes again, we will receive more grace and will enter fully into our inheritance. With this great hope before us, therefore, prepare your minds for action – for spiritual warfare, for prayer, for witnessing, for obedience. Keep sober in spirit so that you can make wise choices and avoid the perils of the enemy. Fix your hope completely on what the resurrected Jesus will give you when He returns.

I think you can see that the resurrection of Jesus has such powerful life-changing potential for us. Paul prayed this for the Ephesian Christians in 1:18-20. “I pray that God will open the eyes of your heart so that you will know the surpassing greatness of His power toward you who believe, and I want you to know what this power is – it is the same power that He used when He raised Christ from the dead.”

It is the same power He used when He exalted Him to His right hand. It is the same power He used when He subjected all demonic forces beneath His feet and made Him Lord of all.

That, my friends, is the power that God is directing your way – to change your life because the resurrection of Jesus means that we have power for holy living and ministry.

I want to point you to one more passage from Peter as we bring this to a close today. This is from Peter’s second letter and He said this:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.

Can you imagine God destroying this universe? Well, if He made it, He can certainly unmake it, and in light of the future judgment Peter asks, “what sort of people should we be in holy conduct and godliness? In light of the coming day of God in which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt with intense heat?”

But we know that is just the prelude to the re-creation of all things when he remakes the heavens and the earth and there is no unrighteousness anywhere. Peter then says, “since this is what we really look for, let us be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ will come again. We know He will come again because God has raised Him from the dead. And because God has raised Him from the dead, we have new life and new purpose – we are empowered for holy living and our lives will never be the same.

Now, I want to ask you today, considering this great truth that Jesus has risen from the grave and that He lives to empower you for a changed life, are you receiving this power? Are you following Him and living in a manner that pleases Him? Or, is there something you are holding onto that you won't let go? Why not let it go today? Why not enter this new life that He has planned for you, that He died for, and that He rose for?

Would you pause for a moment and pray along with me?

Father, you know I am often weak and disobedient, but I also know your grace is greater than my failure. I let go of this sin in my life, and I choose to walk with you and live the new life that you promise by Christ's resurrection, and I pray this in his name. Amen.