

How the Resurrection Applies to You

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On the banks of the Muscatatuck River in southern Indiana near my home town, lies much of the history and the background of my earthly life. As you go up the hill from the Jennings County Courthouse, you go over a hill and you enter into a little valley in a land that time in some ways has forgotten, where the Vernon Cemetery is located. There in the Vernon Cemetery lies buried the lives that touched my life in so many ways, not just my family but in the broader community. It's one of my favorite places to go when I have some time for reflection because I know so many of the stories that are represented by the tombstones that are there. The culture of funerals and deaths and cemeteries is quite a bit different from where I'm at to where I'm from. It's a lot different back there. There are tombstones with the names and everything, you know, around here you go to Forest Lawn and everything is flat and you don't see that and you get a different sense of it, and having grown up in that area, I know the stories of so many people that are buried there. I have a mental picture and I wish like anything they you and I could take a trip there and just have some unhindered time to walk through and think about life and think about the stories that are represented there.

If you went in and took the first little road to the left down through the side of the cemetery, you'd come upon the tombstone of a woman who was electrocuted on the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. She was out in a rainstorm adjusting her antenna to try to get better reception and lightning struck and she died. Over to the right just a little bit is a little eight-year-old girl that died of cancer. And next to her, her grandmother who later committed suicide at the age of 87. If you look across the road, and we're talking about places that are a few steps apart, across the road from them is the man was murdered on Christmas day 1971 at the Ritz Bar and Grill. What he was doing in the Ritz Bar and Grill on Christmas day, I'm not quite sure. If you go over to the right a couple of sections, you'll come upon a tombstone of a man named Pat O'Connor. Pat on May 26, 1958 appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated magazine, four days later he was killed on the first lap of the Indianapolis 500 in the third turn of that. If you go back to another section across the main road going in, there are the four tombstones representing the bodies of the children from the Hall family killed by a drunk driver, the grandchildren of my kindergarten teacher. And thousands of other stories like that.

The stories are all different, of course, but the setting is peaceful and I've sat by the Muscatatuck River there and just had times to think and to reflect on life. It's a microcosm of the greater reality that is testified in every cemetery. That just happens to

kind of be my cemetery, if I can put it that way. That's where my life roots go to, and in every cemetery witnesses of similar stories of tragic deaths of people whose time had come in their 80s or their 90s and all points in between, stories of sorrow, stories of success, but all ending in the same place in the same location, in the grave, and the stories are eventually forgotten over time as generations come and generations go. But in every circumstance, or almost every circumstance, at one point when death came to that particular person at that particular time, for most of those people there was someone, some loved one, some family who when the word of death came said, "No! No, I don't want that! No, this can't be! I mean, I have the Sports Illustrated in my hand. What do you mean Pat is no longer with us?" And here today even in this room, similar stories of people who have as you not represented in a tombstone but represented in living lives of brothers and sisters in Christ here, have similar stories where death has come sooner than you wished to someone that you loved and the pain and the sorrow of that has been intense, and your life impacted by the reality of death. Stories that could be multiplied as many times as you would like them to be multiplied, and I feel the sorrow that many of you are going through as you walk down those roads. It's a privilege to share in some of those sorrows with you as your pastor. But all of those things, those tombstones, the lives here today that have been affected by death, all of those things pointing to a universal reality about the human condition that we don't often enough bring ourselves face-to-face with and contemplate. We as the human race and we as individual men and women, are utterly powerless to predict death, to stop death when we would choose to do so, and are utterly powerless to reverse death. We could speak to the filled casket and say, "Come back! Please come back! I beg you to come back!" and nothing happens in response. "But my heart is breaking here." And death is indifferent to our pleas, it's indifferent to our cries of sorrow and grief and discouragement, and it responds to us with silence, and as it were, mocks our inability to do anything about it.

That backdrop of human helplessness in the relentless face of death, that black backdrop, shows forth all the more strikingly the divine power of the resurrection, the divine power of God expressed in the resurrection. You could probably say that nothing like the resurrection of Jesus Christ shows that God can do what we cannot; that the living God of the universe, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our divine Savior, the Lord Jesus, they are not powerless in the face of death like we are.

It was only last week that we celebrated Easter, Resurrection Sunday, and in the simplest words that we read about in the Scripture, the angel declared to Mary in Matthew 28:6, speaking of Jesus as she was looking for his tomb, looking for his body, the angel said to her, "He is not here for He has risen." What is that? Death has been conquered? Someone has defeated the power of death when you and I are so obviously impotent before the tomb? "He is not here, He has risen." Those words testified by the inspired word of God, those words historically spoken in time and space about a time and space reality, is the one beacon of light into the despair of death that gives us hope, that gives us a sense that death is not the end. While you and I lack the power to do anything else about it, you and I are helpless in the face of the power of death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ points us in a direction that says, "Here is the way beyond the grave." Glorious glorious truth, death and the grave are not the end.

I wasn't here last week, I was preaching someplace else. I know Phil preached on the resurrection, John MacArthur preached on the resurrection last week, but I'm not done talking about the resurrection here this morning. There is just a little bit more to be said about it, a lot more to be said about it. There are so many different ways that you could talk about the resurrection, you could never cease talking about it and it would never exhaust the importance of it. As I've been thinking over the past few days, it's become clear to me that it's great to celebrate Easter, it's great to celebrate the resurrection, but part of the problem of that is that we isolate it to one day in the year, to one weekend in the year, and it tends to recede into the background during the other 51 weeks. That is not as it should be because the resurrection permeates every aspect of true Christian salvation. The resurrection is essential to everything that has flowed from that moment when God saved you from your sin and we need to spend just a little more time talking about it this week and it has occurred to me that I probably ought to make it a pattern in my future ministry to talk about the resurrection more carefully and systematically throughout the year to find ways to emphasize this because of its central crucial significance.

What I want to do this morning is have you turn to the book of Romans. We're going to take a short break from my study of 1 John. I want to take you to the book of Romans. There is a little method to the madness here in what I'm doing. A while back, a couple three years ago, I taught a series on the deity of Christ and I restricted the discussion to material that was found in the Gospel of John and just to find a way to locate a doctrine in one book of the Scriptures and then let other things flow from it, but a place to express at one place where many different truths were expressed and that was to kind of simplify things for learning purposes instead of going through all 66 books of the Bible. Well, today in this message, I want to kind of treat the resurrection that way from the book of Romans and help you see from one book and a book that you can go back and kind of find your flow, go through it and be able to recall what I'm about to say to you this morning, to be able to recall it simply and yet to recall things that are so comprehensive.

The book of Romans, as you know, systematically explains the nature of God's salvation of sinners. Salvation in the broadest sense is essential, it is necessary because God the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, the eternal Spirit who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, that God, that Creator God will one day judge sinners in his wrath.

Look at Romans 1, beginning in verse 18. Why is salvation necessary? It's because God is angry with us. God is angry at our sin. Romans 1:18 says, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." If you look over at chapter 2, verse 5, this is going to be a survey, it's going to be a quick survey of many different important themes this morning, chapter 2, verse 5 says, "because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." And as Paul goes on and expounds his doctrine of salvation, he makes it clear that that divine wrath is upon every man, woman and child who has ever been born into

existence on this earth because every man, woman and child is a sinner who has violated the law of God.

Look at chapter 3, verse 10, where Paul said, "There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one." My name and your name are not written in a footnote as an exception to the word of God there. We are guilty sinners. We deserve the wrath of God and what that passage in Romans 3 is saying to us in no uncertain terms is that we cannot save ourselves. We are spiritually dead. We are in bondage to sin and we like it that way. Apart from Christ, we like it that way and we are horribly and miserably lost with divine wrath approaching on the horizon. Into that desperate situation, we talked about the desperate situation of death and now the desperate situation of being lost in sin, although those aren't the points of my message today, into that desperate situation the Apostle Paul expounds the glory and the hope of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at Romans 5, beginning in verse 6. Paul says, "For while we were still helpless," helpless, unable to help ourselves, unable to help anyone else, utterly, totally helpless, as helpless and dead as a corpse in the grave, "while we were still helpless, at the right time Jesus Christ died for the ungodly." Words of hope, the beacon of light shines into the lost world of sinners. Verse 7 of Romans 5, "For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved," here it is, "from the wrath of God through Him." That certain coming wrath of God, there is one means of deliverance and it is through the Lord Jesus Christ who died for the ungodly.

Now for many of us, what I've said so far is pretty familiar territory biblically and spiritually speaking. What I want you to see this morning may perhaps be a little less familiar, a little less ready on your tongue as you think about spiritual things, as you express biblical truth. What may be less familiar is how the resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to every aspect of your salvation. If it weren't for the resurrection of Christ, there would be no hope, and if it weren't for the resurrection of Christ, these things that I'm about to express would be demolished and left in ruins. Your confidence in Christ and who he is, your assurance of forgiveness, if there is no resurrection, there is no assurance; your spiritual growth, if there is no resurrection, there is no power for spiritual growth; your future glory, if Christ is not raised, you will not be raised either. And in what we're going to see in these remaining moments here from the book of Romans is that there are four crucial spiritual realities, four crucial spiritual realities that the resurrection certifies to us to strengthen our confidence and our hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the goal of this this morning is for you to see how the resurrection is woven through, wrapped around and central to everything about the reality of your salvation and we're going to see that primarily from passages in the book of Romans. It's a great theme that the Apostle Paul weaves throughout this entire book.

The first reality that I want to lay out before you, this one will go quickly, first of all is that the resurrection certifies our Savior. The resurrection certifies our Savior to our conscience and says, "Yes, he is the true one. He is the true Savior distinguished from all others." When you follow the Lord Jesus Christ, you can know that you're following the one true Savior, the one who truly can redeem you from sin, the one who truly can deliver you from the wrath of God. All of those unseen spiritual realities upon which your eternal destiny hinge, all of those things are certified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Look at Romans 1:4. Jesus Christ claimed to be God. As you read through the Gospels, he claimed to be God and the resurrection proved that what he was saying was true. It certified us, it certified Christ's statements, I should say. It put the stamp of authenticity on what he said. It put the stamp of authenticity on his person and the Lord Jesus Christ who affirmed the Old Testament and authorized the New Testament, his whole being was certified by the resurrection.

Romans 1, beginning in first 3, let's say. Paul writes and says, "I'm writing about the Gospel of God," and he says in verse 3, this Gospel is "concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh," and get this, look at this, read it, "who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." Think back with me to what we were saying earlier about human helplessness in the face of death. Our total inability despite our deepest heart urgings and longings and the deepest sorrows and grief and saying, "Oh, please come back!" and we can't do anything about it. And yet by the power of God, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. That tomb is empty. There is no body there. And by the resurrection, you have the certification that everything Jesus Christ said about himself and about the kingdom of God was true.

Now think with me, during his earthly ministry Jesus Christ performed many mighty miracles. He taught with great and unparalleled authority. But if he had died and stayed dead, if there was a marker over his tomb and you peeked in and the body was still there 30 years later, 300 years later, 3,000 years later, this claim to deity would be totally empty and meaningless because there would be nothing to authenticate that what he said during life was true after his death. It would all be over and any thinking person would say, "He's just like everyone else. A shooting star across the night sky but when he died he stayed dead and he's buried and there's no hope left from the words that he spoke. It was all in vain."

Well, the resurrection uniquely marks off Jesus Christ as the Son of God. It puts that divine stamp of authenticity, that certification and declares his deity, his godhood in a powerful way that nothing else could do because in the resurrection God did something with Christ that no human being could do and the power of his resurrection and the fact that he is alive certified by more than 500 people who saw him over the 40 ensuing days and many other ways, in the resurrection you have Christ lifted up and distinguished from all others who have ever walked on the face of the earth. And with that in mind, you go back to his words, you go back to the Gospels, you read what he said and say, "Yes, this is the word of God. I know on the other side of the resurrection with even greater certainty the truthfulness of what he said."

The resurrection certifies our Savior and if you care at all about your eternal soul, you want that certification. You want to know that. You want that to be true. If you are here as a Christian, what you're saying is, "I have reposed all of my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to deliver me from sin and to deliver me safely before a holy God." In the resurrection, God speaks to your conscience and says, "All is well if you have trusted Christ like that. All is well because I have certified for you for all time to know by the resurrection, by that which no one else can do, that this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And if you are joined to him by faith, you are united with Christ, then I am pleased with you as well. I accept you like I accept my Son." And the divine certification of that is found in what only God can do, it's certified in the resurrection.

Now, how does that impact you? What is your response to that? Well, it's supernatural confidence. Turn back to the Gospel of John for just a moment to see an illustration of what I'm saying here. John 20, I'll probably go quickly and not give you time to get there. As you're looking for it, I'll read it. John 20:26. Remember what Thomas' reaction was when he saw the resurrected Christ. In John 20:26, "After eight days, the disciples of Christ were inside and Thomas was with them," you remember Thomas didn't see him in his first manifestation to the disciples. He hadn't seen Christ and he said, "I'm not going to believe unless I put my finger in his side." Well, in this setting in John 20:26, "Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.'" Thomas had a man with a mortal wound in front of him who was alive, something that contradicted all human experience. He knew that Jesus had been dead. He knew that he had been in the grave and yet here he is resurrected, undeniably resurrected, and the response of Thomas is what our response should be today when we see Christ for the first time in saving faith, as we think about him now as Christians who have been walking with him for a very long time. We see the resurrection as it were, we mentally comprehend what the Scriptures say about it, and with Thomas we look at the Lord Jesus Christ and say, "My Lord and my God. My Lord and my God, the resurrected one. The resurrection gives me certainty, supernatural confidence, certifies Christ to my conscience for all of eternity. My Lord and my God. My faith is not in vain. How could it be? If God can raise up Christ, he'll raise up me as a lesser included matter." What you see in Thomas is what your heart cry should be in response to Christ, "My Lord and my God. My great Savior." The resurrection certifies that to you with certainty.

But as we think through salvation and the resurrection, it gets better. It gets so much better because, you know, the resurrection certifies who Christ is but what about me and my sin? What about this lingering matter of the wrath of God? What do I do about that? How can I know that the wrath of God has truly been turned away from me? Well, point 2: the resurrection certifies our justification. It certifies our justification. It attests to the reality of eternal forgiveness of sin. That's what I mean by that. It attests to the reality that God has declared us righteous for all of eternity based on the work of Christ. And when we use the term "justification," it has the sense that God has declared the believer in Christ righteous. For the Christian, God forgives all of your sin and accepts you as

righteous in his sight based on the perfect righteousness of Christ that is put to your spiritual account when you put your faith in him.

When you turn from sin, when I turn from sin and put my faith in Christ, God justified me. He declared me righteous. All sin is forgiven. It's not just that you're not guilty, God declares you righteous. All the demands of the law of God fulfilled. No sins of omission, no sins of commission charged to your account but perfect righteousness as though you had perfectly fulfilled the law of God from the moment of your birth to the moment of your death. Glorious truth is justification. Full undiluted righteousness charged to your account with the associated reality that you have full and unhindered access to the throne of a holy God and death holds no fear because the wrath of God has been turned away.

Well, think with me for a moment: that's an unseen spiritual reality. How do you know that that's true? I mean, that's a pretty important question. You say, "I love the sound of all of that and, boy, if that was true, that would be great but it's all unseen. How can I know that that's true?" Well, the resurrection establishes the certainty of that to the believing heart.

Look at Romans 4, beginning in verse 22. I'm going to short-circuit the context of this but Paul is illustrating the reality of justification by faith in Romans 4 by pointing to a couple of Old Testament examples. First David, and then he talks about Abraham, and in Abraham he speaks about Abraham's faith and in Romans 4:22, speaking of Abraham being justified by faith, verse 22 it says, "it was credited to him as righteousness." Now, read along with me here in verse 23 of Romans 4, "Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him," in other words this wasn't just about Abraham. Verse 24, "but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited," this righteousness that comes by faith, "as those who believe in Him," look at this, "those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." Speaking about justification, speaking about imputed righteousness, he ties it right into the resurrection of Christ and he says in verse 25, speaking of Christ, he says, "He was delivered over because of our transgressions," in other words, Christ was crucified to pay the penalty of our sin, "and He was raised because of our justification." This is so beautiful and glorious. He was delivered over to pay for our sins and he was raised because of our justification. What the Bible is saying there is that he was raised because he had satisfied what God required in the payment for our sins.

What does this mean? Well, Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death, and when Christ died on our behalf, he was paying that penalty of eternal death in full. When God raised him from the dead, the penalty of death having been paid, God raised him from the dead, he was saying in a visible, supernatural, miraculous way that certified the fact that God speaking saying, "I have accepted the sacrifice of Christ on sinners. The wages of sin have been paid in full. Death has no more claim on him and therefore I am raising him from the dead to show forth the certain reality of that." He was raised because of our justification.

Now follow with me here. What that is saying is that God established the invisible, miraculous act of accepting Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. He established that invisible reality, he certified that invisible reality with the visible act of the resurrection. The visible act of the resurrection gave testimony on earth to what had been settled in heaven. He was raised because of our justification. The death penalty was paid in full and God publicly showed that death had no further claim. Death had to release Christ because it had no further claim on him. And when the Bible says that Christ was raised because of our justification, it's saying that God approves of those who believe in Christ in the same way he approves of Christ himself. That is one of the consequences of our union with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are so identified with him, his righteousness is so fully credited to our account that God says, "I have accepted you because I have accepted Christ." We go into heaven, as it were, on the coattails of Christ, clothed in his very righteousness and the resurrection establishes that.

When Jesus said, "I come to give my life a ransom for many," in Matthew 20:28, the only way we could know that that ransom was fully paid was if he went through death and came out on the other side. If he was still dead, his words would be emptied of all meaning. With him resurrected and ascended into heaven, we have the full certification of full forgiveness of our sins. Our brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, is in heaven on our behalf and one day we will be there with him as well. The resurrection certifies that. The truth of the matter is that if we weren't so restrained by our Western culture, many of you should be jumping up and down for joy, "This is so great!" But I understand you can't do that here, but that's a reflection of what should be going on in your heart. If you're a true Christian, that is what's going on in your heart. "This is so great! My sins are forgiven! God has accepted me on account of Christ! Christ has removed the barrier to heaven, he has removed the wrath of God and now the gates are opened wide and I go into my heavenly Father! Hallelujah!" And what I want you to see, oh, what I want you to see is that the resurrection shows that that spiritual reaction to those truths is not in vain and will not be disappointed in the end. That's the point. The resurrection certifies the reality of your justification in a way that lets you know that your hope is not in vain. As John MacArthur has said, "Right now, this life right here on this earthly sod, this is as bad as it gets for the Christian. Everything beyond it is resurrection glory." And that hope is not in vain because of the resurrection.

But do you know what? It gets better. It gets better. You say, "But that's a past act and that's a future reality, what about in between? How am I supposed to live now in the midst of this world of temptation and trials and tears and sorrows? How am I supposed to live now? Where is the day-to-day reality of this? How can I live a godly life now?" Well, brothers and sisters in Christ, turn again to the resurrection because point 3: the resurrection provides for our sanctification as well. The resurrection provides for our sanctification. When I use the term sanctification, what I'm referring to is the believer's progressive growth in holiness as he goes through this life as the Holy Spirit conforms our character and our behavior to the image of Christ. He shapes our character to be like that of Christ.

Now, side point but a very important side point: you as a Christian are responsible to pursue that kind of spiritual growth. 2 Peter 3:18 says, in a command it says, "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Grow. That's a command and it's a command directed to you. It's not a command to God. The command is directed to you. You are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You are to pursue that.

The glory of what we're talking about here today is not that aspect of your personal responsibility, but about the reality of the resurrection and how that impacts your day-to-day Christian life. Listen, every single moment of your Christian life is impacted by what we are about to see. There is nothing outside the scope of what we're about to hear because what the resurrection says, with the resurrection you are not left alone – follow me – you are not left alone to your natural abilities and your inconsistent spiritual commitment to achieve the goal of sanctification. When you were saved, when God saved you, he gave you resurrection life in salvation and that resurrection life gives you the power to walk in newness of life. You're not left to your own natural abilities. And those of you that have been Christians for any length of time and have any measure of self-reflection know that you miserably fail on a day-to-day basis in being the kind of Christian that you would like to be, and even more importantly, that God calls you to be. You know that. Well, in the resurrection we have the promise of God, the power of God given directly to us, planted in our souls that help us transcend our sinful tendencies, that help us transcend our limitations, and to achieve spiritual growth that goes beyond what we would be able to do on our own. The power of God is at work in your heart.

Look at Romans 6:4, speaking of the spiritual reality of salvation as illustrated by the symbol of baptism. Romans 6:4, Paul says, the Bible says, God says through his inspired word. He says, "we have been buried with Him through baptism into death," watch this, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead," there is that resurrection theme, "through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." Verse 5, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection," and then he applies it and says, "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that," here's the purpose, "we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." If you are a Christian, the Bible says you are no longer a slave to sin. Paul says you share in the resurrection power of Christ and you have the power to increasingly overcome sin in your life.

Look at verse 8, the power to overcome sin. The resurrection provides for your sanctification. Look at verse 8, "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but," look, here's the resurrection, "the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." In verse 12 he says, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but," here is how you're to live your Christian life, "present yourselves

to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." God has planted in you the very same power that raised Christ from the dead, physically raised him from the dead, the power that did that is at work in your Christian life as well.

Paul alludes to this in Ephesians 1:19 when he is praying for the Ephesians. He says, "I am praying that you would understand," verse 19 of Ephesians 1, "what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." Resurrection power.

Now, I want to address something really practical and hopefully helpful here. I want you to understand something important. When we talk about resurrection power, we think about the resurrection of Christ from the dead and the glory and the magnificence of that and the Bible tells us that that resurrection power is what's at work in your life now as a true believer in Christ. If you're honest with yourself, you step back and say, you kind of scratch your head and say, "Man, sometimes that's not really the case. Sometimes I'm just like Don Green and I have days where it just seems like sin clings to me. Sometimes I have days where the things that come out of my mouth are just not... where did that come from?" And you are prone to discouragement and you think, "What is wrong with me? If these things are true, if resurrection power in my life is true, then why this?" Well, the resurrection didn't eradicate your sin nature. Oh, listen to me, beloved, for the sake of your soul, listen to me: the fact that you have an ongoing struggle with sin does not negate the truth of what we just talked about from Romans 6. Even the Apostle Paul just after he wrote that could say in Romans 7:15, he says, "Do you know what? I don't understand. I'm not practicing what I would like to do but I'm doing the very thing that I hate." And here's what I want you to see, this is so important to have a proper perspective on your Christian life and to persevere with courage: resurrection power is not manifested in unbroken spiritual ecstasy in the life of the redeemed. It's not manifested in the supernatural spiritual high from which you never come down. That's not it. Paul makes that plain in Romans 7 that that's not what it is. That's not how we experience.

You say, "Well, what is it, then, if that's not what it is?" Here it is: the power of the resurrection, the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit in your life, how do you recognize that? It's because the controlling power of sin, the controlling dominating power of sin in your life has been broken. Resurrection power strengthens you to change over time and – get this – to persevere in the faith. Don't underestimate the glory of that and the power that it takes to do that. Resurrection power makes Christ and the Bible sweeter to you over time even though you fall short along the way. Those spiritual attitudes and that kind of spiritual perseverance is not natural. That is not endemic to the natural mind. A love for Christ, a love for his word, a broken power of sin, ongoing struggle against sin to resist it, to confess it, to repent of it, that is resurrection power in your life, beloved. That is contrary to human nature and that is where you see the power of the resurrection at work in your life. Don't underestimate and don't despise the glory of the day-to-day effort to love Christ because that is how resurrection power is manifested in your life. And

when you see those attitudes at work in your heart, you can know that the resurrection is at work in you providing for your sanctification.

Get this, today, now, the resurrection is an invisible reality to us. It was visible to 2,000 years ago but now to us it's an invisible reality. The resurrection is made visible now today in your transformed life. You manifest that in your own heart, we manifest it to each other as we live transformed lives. The transformed lives of Christians testify to a hidden reality behind that fact that says the resurrection is at work, the resurrection is true, Christ is who he said he was and I have truly been redeemed from my sins with certainty and without fail.

But do you know what? It gets better. Oh, it gets better. Understand this, beloved: it gets better. I mean, the resurrection has certified to us the deity of Christ, it has certified the certain forgiveness of our sins, it certifies the power to live the Christian life and it gets better than that? Yes. What about when I die? What about when the cemetery is waiting for me? Well, point 4: the resurrection guarantees our glorification. The resurrection guarantees our glorification. The final step in salvation is still yet to come. The best part of being a Christian is still ahead. It is still future to us who are living here today. When you die, your spirit goes to be with Christ even as your body goes to the grave, and then when Christ returns for his church, he will raise us from the grave and give us resurrection bodies that are like his. Here's the point, here's the logic of Scripture: just as God raised Christ from the dead, so also those who are joined to him by faith are also going to be raised from the dead. God is not going to withhold final resurrection from us when he gave it to Christ. He's going to give final resurrection to us as well. We're going to be glorified. We're somehow going to have bodies that resemble what we have now but are going to be free from all sin, defect and decay; a body fit to see Jesus Christ face-to-face and to enjoy communion with him throughout all of eternity. Hallelujah! That's right.

Look at Romans 8. Look at verse 28 and just stick with me here as we go through passage real quickly. Paul says, "we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." And notice what he says here as he speaks about the nature of salvation from God's perspective. He says, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren," Christ will be our head, "and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." He uses the past tense to describe a future event, using the past tense to certify its certainty to occur. Then look at what he says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" Look at verse 34, "Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." All of these glorious things about salvation Paul climaxes in saying God is for us, God raised Christ from the dead, these things will all belong to you one day as well. The certainty of glorification is certified by the resurrection of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 6:14, Paul said, 1 Corinthians 6:14 if you want to look it up later, "Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power." 2 Corinthians 4:14, "He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus." We will be raised and these decaying things of tents that we live in now are going to be transformed into perfection. Your glorification is certain and certified by the resurrection. The best part of salvation for you is still to come. No more sin. No more fear. No more grief. No more death. Rejoice, beloved, because nothing could be better than that because that's for all of eternity.

Well, wait. One thing could make it better and that would be if every one of you knew Christ in this saving way. Turn over to Romans 10 and as you're turning there, if you're not a Christian today, come to Christ for salvation. Oh, if you're not a Christian today, come with me to heaven. Put your trust in Christ and come with the rest of us to heaven, I beg you. I implore you. I'm on my knees, as it were, before you to come to Christ. And listen to what the Bible says in Romans 10:9 and 10 because the resurrection applies to you as well, you who are still outside of Christ. Paul says, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." Believe in Christ for the salvation of your soul, my friend, because this offer of the Gospel, all of these glories that I have been talking about, forgiveness of sin, spiritual growth, confidence in Christ, the glories of heaven, they are for everyone who believes. They don't just belong to me or a small circle here in Grace Church. They are for everyone who believes in Christ. Romans 10:13 says, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

If you're outside of Christ and you know that, go to Christ now and ask him to open your heart so these realities could be yours and put your faith in him. Turn from your sin and believe in him because Jesus Christ is calling you through the proclamation of the Gospel. Today is the acceptable day. Today must be the day of your salvation.

Let's pray together.

Father, we glory in the resurrected Christ and with the Apostle Paul we say that our desire is to know him and the power of his resurrection, not that we've already become perfect but we press on in order that we may lay hold of that for which you laid hold of us. Everything we have discussed here, dear Father, is an expression of your grace and mercy and love on those who believe and we thank you for it. And for those that are here that still have not bent the knee, O God, do the work in their heart like you did in Lydia. Open their heart now, Father. Open their heart now so that they might respond to the things that are being spoken, so that they might put their faith in Christ so that they too might be saved. With total trust and dependence in you, total confidence in your goodness and with the purest, deepest sense of love and adoration and worship that we can muster in these sinful bodies, Father, we offer you our praise, we offer you our thanks, and we commend this all to you in the wonderful name of the Lord Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead and alive at your right hand. Amen.

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