

What the Resurrection means to me

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[0 : 00] We're going to be looking at the Romans 6 passage, so have your Bibles ready there as we look at what the resurrection means for me. One of the big questions people want help with is how to live a better life, to lead a changed life.

Christians really ask that question. Not to have our past mistakes haunt us or to keep living the same way that we used to. We want to be more like Jesus, but it's really difficult.

How does the resurrection make a difference? How can it help me now? Is there any help for me now while I'm alive? Did the resurrection change anything?

Paul's answer is yes, of course it does. It makes a huge difference. And he unpacks that in this chapter, in Romans 6. Now if it's true that we inherit all that sinful nature in Romans 5, if you look in Romans 5, you see how it puts Jesus and Adam in opposite camps and says, well, we used to be with Adam, but now we're with Jesus.

And is there any escape from that realm of sin, living like the old Adam used to sin? Shall we go on sinning just because God has poured out all this grace on us?

[1 : 15] Paul's answer is an emphatic no. May it never be. Let it not be like that. It's an emphatic no. And the reason is because of the resurrection.

What we'll find in our passage is that the resurrection helps us with two things. It tells us where we are. And it tells us who we are. So we're going to look at those two things together.

You'll remember on Good Friday, Nick spoke to us of the two men who control our lives, Adam and Christ. To be in Adam is to inherit what he offers, sin and death.

To be in Christ is to get what he offers, goodness and life. And Paul says in Romans 6, verse 1, he says, What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may abound?

By no means. We died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? What is he talking about there? It's a very strange picture. We're dead to sin.

[2 : 13] And how can we live in it? Maybe a helpful way is to think of sin like a foreign power or like a foreign land. A kingdom where sin and death have control.

We've escaped that kingdom. We don't live there anymore. We're living in a new kingdom. And the new kingdom doesn't have anything to do with that old kingdom. So how can you do the things that the old kingdom does? If that makes sense.

It's like you used to live in the UK. And now you live in South Africa. We do things differently. You can't be in two places at the same time.

So you've got to live like you meant to be in the new land. You've got to follow those rules. When in Rome, do as the Romans do, as they say. So the first question we need to ask ourselves is, where are we as Christians?

Are we living in the old realm of sin and death? Or have we been taken out and put in a new country? Paul talks about this in Colossians. He says, it's a very similar idea, but just something I want to pick up.

[3 : 12] He says, God has rescued us from the dominion or kingdom of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. Notice that word that He's rescued us. What Jesus did on the cross was a rescue mission.

Which makes sense if you consider what living in the kingdom of sin does to us. It kills us. We need to be, we're not powerful enough to fight it off. We can't kill it.

It is going to kill us. The proof of that? We all die. We don't have the power to escape ourselves. We need to be rescued if we want to live with Christ as our King. We simply can't get there by ourselves.

So here's one way to stop yourself from sinning. To remind yourself of which country you belong to. You're no longer a citizen of the land of sin.

You're a citizen of the kingdom of God. And just think about the land where you were rescued from. Was it fun? Was it enjoyable? Did it give you peace and rest? No, it was horrible living there.

[4 : 12] It's like a Jew escaping from the Nazis in the Second World War. Once he's escaped, why on earth would he want to go back there? They want to kill him. No, he's going to stay in England. Well, not in France. He would have had to be in England or America.

What about the land that we live in? The kingdom of God. What does it give us? Well, think of all the good things that the cross offers. Forgiveness. Reconciliation. Peace. It's like when you go on holiday.

You get away from the rat race to go and live in a peaceful, beautiful part of the world. You don't go and have a holiday where it's hard and difficult and stressful. It's like that with God. He's put us in a new kingdom.

Why would you want to go back to the old one? So when sin comes knocking on your door, you just say, hang on a second. I know it looks like fun. I used to enjoy it, but actually it wasn't really nice.

It made me really sick. I don't want to go back there. I'm happy where I am. So the resurrection helps us to know where we are. We're in a new kingdom. Secondly, it helps us to know who we are.

[5 : 15] Let's read on in the next few verses. Verse 3. Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Now clearly something has changed for a Christian. He used to be part of an old kingdom. Now he's part of a new kingdom. How did that change? Well, the Bible here says it's baptism. How does that work?

Well, we know from our study of how the covenants work that there's a promise and there's a sign. Do you remember Noah? Go to the ark and I'll keep you safe. And here's the sign, the rainbow, that God won't destroy the world again.

Remember God made a promise to Abraham about the land and circumcision was the sign. Well, Jesus is to us what Abraham and Moses were to the Jews.

We still need a covenant sign. We need a stamp on our passport that says, welcome to the kingdom of Jesus. And in a sense, that stamp is our baptism.

[6 : 24] It's a verification that we've indeed crossed over from death to life. Well, how does that help us? Well, think when you sin. You start doubting that firstly you're actually a Christian.

Secondly, that God really does love you. You end up not sure about it. And you feel really horrible inside. You have this long conversation with yourself. Why? How?

And maybe others. How can you call yourself a Christian? You know, how others do it? So how can you be sure? Is there a sign, something that is objective, outside of my inner thoughts and feelings, that can help us?

And the answer is, yes, it's baptism. It's something that has actually happened to you. And in that sense, it can give you assurance that you are indeed a son of God. Now, baptism doesn't just do it by itself.

It actually does something. The reason baptism here is powerful is that it actually does something that unites us to Christ. And we'll see that it does two things for us.

[7 : 26] Being united to Christ gives us two things. Number one, it in a sense kills us, or it proclaims us as dead. And the other thing it does is it makes us alive.

It says we're alive. Have a look at verse 4 and 3 again. That's 4 and 5. We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with him like this in death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. Now, being baptized into Christ, it's an old-fashioned way of saying, I belong to him.

He is my new master, my owner, my Lord. Now, we kind of chafe at those kind of descriptions. We don't like to talk in those terms. But if you think about it, we're all owned by someone to some degree.

None of us is really free. Even in our work contracts, you're required to do certain things. You have a boss. And he owns you, in a sense. Baptism is a bit like our branding mark.

[8 : 49] It confirms to us and to the world that we belong to Jesus, our King. But this marking we receive is a deep one. It marks us into our very souls.

It completely identifies us with Jesus in a very deep and powerful way. We are somehow incorporated into him in such a way that whatever happens to him happens to us.

It's almost a complete identification. It's not a complete identification. I'm still me and Jesus is still Jesus. But somehow, in a very deep sense, we're the same person.

In my baptism, I'm assured that Christ's death is my death. Now, we must all die. But we can either die with Christ and have our sins forgiven or die without Christ and face the consequences of our sins by ourself.

What it means to be dead in Christ here is to have our old sinful self crucified with him on the cross. And in a sense, it's like our old sinful self has almost been left there and we get to live a new life.

[9 : 56] Have a look at verse 6. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slave to sin because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

I've got a new identity in Christ now. I don't belong or am owned by my old sinful selfish person anymore. It says it's been done away with.

That body of sin has been done away with. Now, that interesting word there, it means literally knocked out. KO'd. Boom. On the ground. And there he lies.

Can't do anything to me anymore. So who am I? I'm not that old knocked out person. I'm a new living person. I don't have my old selfish desires anymore.

That's how we've got to think of ourselves. There he is. I'm new. In fact, he's not quite there. He's actually been nailed with Jesus on the cross. Now, here's a thought.

[10 : 57] In order for me not to sin, all I have to do is leave my old sinful selfish self stuck on the cross. If I want to sin, I'm the new me.

I don't want to sin. But if somehow I do want to sin, what I've got to do is go back to the cross and pull my old selfish sinful person off there, pry the nails loose, put him on my shoulder, and go and do the naughty things that I want to do.

And then I'm going to blame that dead person for making me do it. When I get caught up, they say, well, why did you do it? It's like, well, it wasn't me. It was my old self. And they said, well, why did you do that?

And you just don't have an excuse. I don't know about you, but it's not fun playing with dead people. So another way to stop sinning is to ask myself, who am I?

Am I my old sinful self that has been left with, not left with Jesus, but that got nailed with Jesus on the cross and that died there? That's the whole point. It's dead.

[12 : 00] And if it's dead, it's powerless. It can't talk back to me. It can't make me do stuff. It's dead. It died there. And then what happened with Jesus is he got raised to life. And so I'm also raised to life.

We'll see that in a second. So my old sinful self is there on the cross. I'm going to leave him there. I don't want to do what he did anymore. That person is dead on the cross.

I'm going to leave him there. So the first question is, where are you? You're in the new kingdom. Who are you? Well, you're new in Christ, but it means you kind of got divided in two.

There's an old you and a new you. And the old you is dead. Leave him there. Don't play with him. You don't need him. What about the new me?

Who else am I? Paul is saying that baptism unites me to Christ. And firstly, what it does is it unites me to his death. Is that all? What else does it do?

[12 : 57] Well, it unites me with his life. And this is where the power of the resurrection comes in. Let's look at verse four and five again. We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death.

And here's the important bit. In order that, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

The reason we included in his death is to be included in his life. It's a so that. There's a certainty here. It's a consequent clause.

Because, and just be in the same way that Jesus died and rose again, we know that he rose again. We know that I've got that same life in me as well.

As sure as Christ rose from the dead, it is certain that we've got new life in Christ. The same power at work in Christ, coming out of the dead, is at work in our lives.

[14 : 03] And just look at that power. Have a look at verse nine. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again. Death no longer has mastery over him.

The death he died, he died to sin once for all. But the life he lives, he lives to God. Christ died once. But now that he's raised from the dead, death has got no hold on him anymore.

He has the power of an indestructible life. In one sense, he was raised stronger and more powerful than before he died. Death was dealt a death blow at the resurrection of Christ.

Sin and death are like combat forces trying to get hold of Jesus, trying to knock him out. There's this cosmic boxing ring. And they're trying to get Jesus.

And then they get him. Boom, boom. And Jesus lies down to the count of three. One. Two. And then they're dancing in the corner. They think they're one. And on the third count, on the third day, Jesus stands up.

[15 : 06] And he just takes one. And they look at him, actually. And then they just go, oopsie. And they're out of there. Now they can't knock Jesus out anymore. Well, I guess when he stood up, he would have just, boom, boom, just took them out.

One, two, boom, two shots. Jesus hitting them, them hitting the floor. The resurrection changed what death and sin can do to people. It's power. Their power has been broken.

And they're standing, whimpering in the corner. And Jesus is the victorious one. So now, in our battles, who are we?

Well, we're also alive. We've got Jesus fighting in our corner. And not only that, he actually gives us his powers. Like, he trained us. Like, we've got his power.

The same power that brought him back from the dead is now working, is kind of coursing through our veins. So when sin comes knocking, hey, let's go do something naughty. First of all, I don't live with you anymore.

[16 : 06] I live over here. Secondly, I'm dead. You don't even know me. Thirdly, okay, you want to mess with me? I'm gonna, I've got power to be victorious over you.

You're not going to be able to beat me anymore. We have the same power that brought Christ back from the dead. So when sin comes knocking, you just remind yourself, I'm alive in Christ. His power is my power.

His victory is my victory. His freedom is my freedom. His life is my life. We need to recapture the truth of the power of the risen Christ and his victory over sin and death.

If we want to experience that same power in our lives, just listen to these words, a sermon from the time of the early church. It's an Easter sermon.

But just listen how they understood what that meant for Jesus and how strong and victorious he is. But he rose from the dead and mounted up to the heights of heaven.

[17 : 08] When the Lord had clothed himself with humanity and suffered for the sake of the sufferer, that's us, and had been bound for the sake of the imprisoned and had been judged for the sake of the condemned and buried for the sake of the one who was buried.

He rose from the dead. And he cried out with a loud voice, Who is he that contends with me? Let him stand in opposition to me.

I set the condemned man free. I give the dead man life. I raised up one who had been entombed. Who is my opponent?

You know that kind of trash talk before fighters get into the ring? I, he says, am the Christ. I'm the one who destroyed death. I've triumphed over the enemy and trampled Hades underfoot and bound the strong one and carried off man to the heights of heaven.

I, he says, am the Christ. So what the resurrection does for Jesus makes him a big strong man. What that does for us is it makes him fighting in our corner.

[18 : 20] He's our rescuer. He puts us under his arm. And when sin comes knocking, it just looks at us and it sees Jesus and goes running the other way. At least in theory. Christ's resurrection unleashed an unstoppable power in the world.

The world of sin and death is fading. And the world of truth and life is gaining power. The amazing truth for Christians is that that power is ours to have.

Have a look at verse 11. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies so that you obey its evil desires.

In the same way. In the same way. So you, Christian, consider yourself as Christ. Death got hold of him, but death couldn't keep its hold on him.

He's too strong for that. Death wanted him, and it couldn't have him. And Jesus rose up and so destroyed it. In the same way.

- [19 : 27] Just as the reality that the truth that Jesus was raised from the dead, now neither sin nor death have any claim on him. So you, me, us, must think of ourselves in the same way.
- Here's another way to stop sinning. Who am I? I am alive in Christ. I have a new life, a new power, a new force.
- In one sense, I've got the resurrection power of Christ flowing through my veins. I'm not really me. I've been given a new identity. I'm Jesus.
- Now, of course, we're not Jesus. But we've got to think of ourselves like that. And if you do that, don't you think you'd be able to combat these little sins that come at us? I'm stronger. I'm more able to do good.
- My automatic sinful default setting has been changed from sin to goodness. Click, click. The dial of my life has been changed. I used to be a powerless slave to living in the land of sin.
- [20 : 34] Now I've been given a new power, a new life, and I'm not a slave, but a son. Now I'm living under the king of a new kingdom. I don't want to live my old life anymore.
- So then, this Easter, we need to take some realities into account in our lives. The reality of the resurrection for Jesus and how that changed history, and the reality of the resurrection for us.
- There is a power at work that has been kind of unleashed into the world because of Jesus' resurrection that we need to take hold of and make part of our daily lives. There is a reality of the resurrection that can help me here and now.
- When the ways of the world pull me back and tend me to sin, there are two things we must ask ourselves or maybe tell ourselves. Let's ask, where am I? The answer is, I'm not living under that old kingdom anymore.
- I'm living in a new kingdom, under a new king. That old one is horrible and yucky. I'm living in a new one. I'm living in the kingdom of God.
- [21 : 38] Secondly, who am I? Like Christ, I'm both dead and alive. Dead to sin. Dead to death. Dead to sin and its mastery and its control and its power.
- But I'm also alive. Alive to goodness. Alive to God. Alive with the power of the resurrected Christ flowing through my veins. I'm serving a new master and a new king.
- And to serve him is freedom and goodness and blessing and life. Let's thank God for these things. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the power of the resurrection.
- For the reality of the resurrection. For bringing Jesus back from the dead. And of starting a new revolution in the world. A new power. A new way of living. Lord, thank you that in our baptism and in our lives we've got access to that power.
- That we've been buried with Christ. That his death is our death. And that just as he rose again from the dead, his life is our life. Help us, Lord, to remember where we live that we're living in your kingdom.
- [22 : 53] Help us to remember, Lord, who we are. We are citizens of the new kingdom. We were once dead, but now remain alive in Christ. And keep us always in these realities.
- In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Amen. ■■■■ with■■■■■