

**The Spiritual Significance of the Resurrection, Part 1**

Scripture: Romans 6:1-14

Code: 80-165

Through the years, as I've had the privilege of teaching on the resurrection of Christ, we have focused on the historical event. Primarily, through the years we have looked back at the physical characteristics of the story of the resurrection; the tomb, the stone, the soldiers, the women, the disciples, the grave clothes, the angel, all of that. And we have pretty much focused on the historical aspects of the resurrection.

But this morning I want to do something that has been aptly introduced in much of the music this morning, and that is to focus not on the historical data regarding the resurrection, but on its spiritual meaning, the spiritual significance of the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact. It is a well documented fact that Jesus died, was crucified by the Romans under Pontius Pilate, was placed into the tomb, on the third day the tomb was empty, He was gone, He was risen, He was seen by over 500 eye witnesses at once along with numerous other appearances to His disciples. That fact of His resurrection is attested by a myriad of personal eye witnesses by the ongoing life of the church as well.

We could look at the empty tomb, the evidence that it presents. We could look at the lying soldiers who tried to explain away a resurrection. We could look at the grave clothes lying undisturbed, where the body had lain; not as if someone had unraveled them rapidly, but as if someone had gone right through them. We could talk about the massive stone which was sealed with a Roman seal, not be broken, which was rolled away. We could talk about the angels and their conversation. We could talk about the lies of the Roman soldiers, the transformation of the unbelievers, who had no expectation of a resurrection, to believers who preached the resurrection. We could talk about the birth of the church as testimony to the reality of that resurrection. We could talk about our own transformed lives and the living Christ who lives in us and thus we give testimony that He lives.

We could talk about the historical reality of the resurrection from all of those facets, and frankly, it's very important to understand that Jesus actually rose from the dead. That there was a man named Jesus, who was God in human flesh, who came into this world, lived and died by being crucified, and rose from the dead. That is critical to Christian faith. That is critical to every soul in the world because the Bible says in Romans 10:9 that if you "Confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you shall be saved." To be saved from Hell, to be saved from the judgment of sin, the penalty of sin. To be saved from eternal remorse and punishment, one must believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and confess Jesus as Lord.

So knowing about the historical fact of the resurrection is essential; believing that fact is equally essential. That's why all gospel preachers, from the apostles on, have always preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, that means sovereign God and master, and believe that God raised Him from the dead, therefore affirming His death as a substitute for sin, which God accepted, and indicating that He had conquered sin and death, you shall be saved. It's important then to understand the historical fact of the resurrection and to believe it, because it's essential to one's salvation. One cannot be saved apart from understanding the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And so it would certainly be appropriate, and has been through the years, to address the historical reality of the resurrection.

But this morning I want to do something different. I want to look at the resurrection not in its historical reality, but in its spiritual significance. It's spiritual significance. I want to talk about the resurrection not so much as how it related to Jesus Christ, but as to how it relates to us, to you and to me. It is in a very real sense not just a historical event that happened 2,000 years ago, it is a present reality that is happening again and again, spiritually speaking, to many people. It has happened to us. There is a spiritual significance in the resurrection that must be understood.

To put it simply, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was not just His resurrection, it was yours and mine as well. In my ongoing study of the New Testament, which I have been engaged in now for many months, in pursuing every passage of Scripture in the New Testament, and going through it all in preparation for writing the Study Bible, I have repeatedly come across the fact that this spiritual union between a believer and Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, is a constant theme in the New Testament. I have come across it many, many times. And every time I come across it I have to refer the reader back to the main passage which explained its significance, and that's Romans 6. I want you to open your Bible to the sixth chapter of Romans. Over and over and over again, I find myself writing a footnote on a given verse that says "see Romans 6," because there is the full explanation of the significance of our union with Christ in His death and resurrection.

Now, when I say that we as Christians are joined with Christ in His death and resurrection, I am not talking about something ethereal, I am not talking about something mystical, I am not talking about some fantasy of some kind, I am talking about something that is factual, that is historical, but has implications that are spiritual for every one of us. And we are going to see what that involves as we look at Romans 6. Now there's a principle that I want to just begin with in the middle of verse 2, I wish we had time to go back and set it all up but we don't.

Now let me start in verse 2 with the statement "How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" Now that is a very significant statement. How shall we who died to sin live in it? Now as Paul came along and preached the Gospel he was preaching it of course to many Jewish people. And Jewish people had grown up in a system, which basically said, if you want be right with God, if you want to be righteous,

if you want to go to Heaven, you have to do certain good works. And those good works will achieve for you righteousness and eternal life. And then you have to keep on doing them. And you have to live a holy and a righteous life and keep all the prescriptions and all the prescribings of the Mosaic law all the time or you might forfeit that life. Along comes the apostle Paul, and he says this: "God offers you salvation not by works, not by anything you do, have ever done, or ever will do, but purely on the basis of grace. He gives you salvation as a free gift. And, after you've accepted the free gift, not on the basis of anything you've done, just by believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and risen Savior, you receive that free gift. From then on He will continue to forgive all your sins for the rest of your life." That's the Gospel of grace. God will forgive your sins by grace, He will grant you righteousness by grace, He will give you Heaven by grace and then He will continually, by grace, forgive all your sins no matter how many you commit for the rest of your life and then at the end take you to His heaven.

Now to people who spent their whole life in a system that said you not only have to earn your salvation but you have to keep it by doing good that sounded like absolute license. That sounded like a horrible thing because "You're actually saying that once I've accepted this gift, no matter how much I sin His grace will forgive it? Aren't you just setting people free to live sinful lives, because it's all paid for? It's like giving a child an unlimited bank account and saying 'no matter what you want, no matter what you do, I'll cover it all,' and then turning them loose. You'd have to be insane to do such a thing. You'd have to realize that there would be a tremendous temptation to abuse with such magnanimity. Isn't that what we are to understand about this offer of gracious salvation? Isn't this setting people off on a life of sin, because they know it's all covered?" In fact, chapter 5 and verse 20 toward the end of the verse, Paul said it is true that where sin increased grace abounded. The more sin, the more grace. Well that even compounds it more. If God is glorified by being gracious, then maybe we ought to sin the more so He can be the more gracious and get the more glory for His grace. The whole thing seems like a formula for disaster. Is that what Christian theology teaches? Is that really the Gospel? Are we really inviting people to a life of free sin with a promise it'll all be forgiven and just turning people loose? I suppose even in the Gentile world of Rome there were religious systems there who had very high ethical standards and the conformity to those standards was how it had to be if you wanted to please the gods. Nobody that I know of in terms of ethnology or religious history had ever taught anything like this. That all your sins are always going to be forgiven by grace. That just seemed too liberating, too freeing.

And so it's against that backdrop, that Paul writes chapter six. Because people are going to accuse him of preaching a message of liberty, a message of license, a message that leads to abuse, a message that leads to free wheeling sinfulness knowing it's all going to be covered. He has an answer for that. His answer for is this in verse two. "How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" His point is this; our life is not going to be the same. We're not going to go on living in sin because we've been saved by grace. Why? Because we have died, we have died to sin. Something has happened to us. Our salvation is not just a declaration from God, although it is a declaration, it's not just that. It's not just God saying "O.K. I'll forgive your sin because you believe in Me and My Son." It's not just

God saying "I have granted you My Son's righteousness, I have clothed you in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, I have put His righteousness on you because of your faith." It's not just a declaration of that. It's not that God has just imputed to us righteousness. There's something else here. That imputed righteousness, the fact that He puts Christ's righteousness to our account, is certainly true and that's been His discussion in chapter five. But in chapter six He goes beyond that and he says salvation is not just forensic; it's not just a court declaration, it's not just God saying you're not guilty, it's also a transformation so what you are in position before God you are in reality. And that takes place, verse two says, through a death. When a person comes to Christ there's a death that takes place. And He says it's dying to sin. Now this is not describing a process, this is not describing a state of being; it is describing a historical event. When you were saved you died, when you committed your life to Christ you died. There was an event with finality that took place. So no longer are you living in the same sphere.

Those people who killed themselves down in San Diego were under the satanic delusion that they could exit this world and go into another sphere. They were right. They are not going to find the sphere to be what they expected, however. They are going to find themselves awakened in eternal separation from God. Tragedy of all tragedies, but there's no question about the fact that their death ushered them into another dimension. Death always does that. And the same is true spiritually. When you came to Christ and put your trust in Him, you died and you entered a new dimension. And you now live in a different dimension than you lived in before. You live with a different kind of life than you had before. You understand things now you never understood before. You have relationships now you never had before. Your understanding of time and eternity has completely opened up to you and what was darkness is light. You have entered into a completely different dimension because you died when you were saved. Now what are you talking about you say. Well, he's going to explain it; here's his explanation. And he does it in four simple statements.

Number one, four simple truths explain this. At salvation one who believes in Jesus Christ is immersed into Christ, immersed into Christ. Notice verse three. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus - stop right at that point - Now when you see the word baptism or baptized you immediately think of water, don't you. But this verse is dry folks, this verse is absolutely dry. There's no water here. He's not talking about water baptism which is a symbol, an outward symbol, and outward ordinance or right that sort of reflects outwardly an inward work. He's not talking about water, he's using baptized in a very simple sense. It really, if it was, if it was translated instead of transliterated, the Greek word is baptidzo and they didn't translate it, they just took the Greek letters and gave them English letters and came up with baptized, it really means to immerse, to immerse. When you were saved, when you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you were immersed into Christ.

Now we understand that. You know, we say kids don't bother daddy, he's immersed in his work. We understand what that means. We would say about somebody even who went to boot camp in the

military, well he's getting his baptism of fire. We don't mean that that's a literal baptism of flames; we mean that's a very difficult and trying circumstance. Some people become immersed in grief. We mean they're literally submerged into a certain kind of environment. And that's precisely what Paul is saying here. You have been plunged, as it were, into Christ. Christianity you see is not just a religion where people believe certain facts, it is a relationship in which there is a real union between Jesus Christ and the individual. Paul put it this way. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me. For me to live, he said, is Christ. He didn't know where he ended and Christ began.

In Romans 8 Paul says that if any man is Christ's, the spirit of Christ dwells in him. We have a relationship. We have a living Christ dwelling in us. There is a change; we have been immersed into Christ. 1 Corinthians 6:17 he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Galatians 3:27 for all of you who were immersed into Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ. We now as Christians really don't know where we end and He starts, do we? When I preach or teach or serve the Lord or whatever and God blesses, sure it's me and it's my gift and I'm doing whatever I can do in my human strength and by the goodness of God allowing me to do it. But, in the end any spiritual benefit that comes out of anything is His work through me, is it not? Whatever I do in my Christian life by way of obedience and honor and worship to the Lord is His work in me. I don't know where I end and He begins. I can't draw a broad line and separate those two. For me to live is Christ, that's all I know. For me to live is Christ. I live, yet not I. It's that very difficult thing to understand. I live yet I don't live. It's Him in me. When you become a Christian Christ comes to take up residence in you. You are literally immersed into Jesus Christ. That's why the Bible says you better be careful how you treat a Christian because how you treat a Christian is how you are treating whom? Christ. "If you've done it unto the least of these my children," Jesus said, "You've done it unto me. You've done it unto me." He is inseparable from His people.

That's why they were right, those pagans up in Antioch when they first called believers Christians. That means little Christs, little Christs. So Paul's point is 'look, you can't even apply the attitudes before you're a Christian to being a Christian because afterwards there's such a dramatic change.' Sure, if you're an unbeliever, if you've never been changed, if you've never been transformed, if you've never been immersed into Jesus Christ, and the most dominating factor in your life is the love of iniquity, and somebody tells you you can be saved and have all your sins forgiven permanently. You're going to say, "Well, boy, that's really, that's really setting people lose," because you're thinking like an unregenerate person. But converted people don't think like unconverted people, because we have the mind of Christ. We've been immersed into Christ. We're inseparable from Him, and He from us. Now that's the basic principle that He starts with here. Everyone who puts his faith in Jesus Christ is joined with Christ.

Now let's go to the second principle and here's the main one. Since we are immersed into Christ, second point we are immersed into his death and resurrection, we are immersed into his death and

resurrection. Back to verse three. Do you not know that all of us who have been immersed into Christ Jesus have been immersed into his death? Now, you say what does that mean? Well, I'm not talking about something mystical again. I'm not talking about something spooky, or ethereal, or spacey. I'm not talking about something, something like a transmigration of the soul back 2,000 years. I'm not talking about something physical. We're talking about a spiritual reality. When you were joined to Christ you were joined to his death. In what sense? In this sense, and this alone; Christ in His death died in your place, so in effect it was your death. The Bible says the wages of sin is what? Death. Christ died, and he had never sinned, but He died as a substitute for you and me. So His death was really our death because God counted it as if it were our death. Christ died in our place and He died under the full fury of the wrath of God paying completely the penalty for sin. So God poured out all his fury against our sin on Him. So when He died for all intents and purposes we died, because He died our death. That's the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. He died for your sins, He died for my sins. So when we were converted we were literally immersed into Christ Jesus and we were immersed into His death because His death was applied to us. So we died, we died. A real death took place. Follow in verse four.

Not only did we die but therefore we have been buried with Him through that immersion into death. In order that as Christ was raised from the dead, there's the resurrection, through the glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of life. Verse five. For if we become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Now you're getting to the heart of the resurrection. It is not just a historical event, it is a spiritual reality. Is not just something we look back and believe in, it is something in which we participate. We died when He died, because God counted His death as if it was ours. And we rose when He rose, because God counted His resurrection as if it were ours. The penalty of sin was paid, the justice of God was satisfied, and Christ came out of the grave having satisfied God's justice against sin and that is the reason the Bible says He was raised for our justification. And so, in a very real sense, by spiritual application, Christ died for you, was buried for you and rose for you. He didn't need to die for himself, He had no sin. He didn't need to be buried and to rise again for Himself, but it was for you. He did it in your place and consequently it was your death and your resurrection. So when Paul in verse two says we died to sin he's talking about this death in Christ. He's not saying we are dead to sin, he's not talking about some state, he's talking about a historical event. When Christ died I died, when Christ rose I rose. When He died my sins were paid for, when He rose my new life was guaranteed. That's the spiritual meaning of the resurrection. That's the profound intent of Paul in Romans 6 to have us grasp this tremendous truth. Now notice, since we are in the likeness of His resurrection - verse five, end of verse four - we walk in newness of life. The reason we don't just say "Well, I'm a Christian and I'm under grace, and God has forgiven all my sin and He's going to keep forgiving it all until I die so, I'm just going to have at sin like crazy and really enjoy it," is because we aren't who we used to be. You understand that? Sometimes I say to people when I'm talking to them about the Gospel and they say, "Well you know becoming a Christian means I have to stop doing everything I like and start doing everything I don't want to do"; pretty typical, right? I mean I want to do what I want to do. I want a feed my lust, feed my

flesh, do what I like to do, and do what feels good, and fulfill all my longings, and passions, and desires. And if I become a Christian I have to stop all that, go to church, read the Bible, pray; those things don't interest me at all. And I understand that. But the point is when you become a Christian your interests change. All of a sudden what used to interest you you hate, all of a sudden what you used to hate you love, because you aren't who you used to be. That's the new creation. If any man be in Christ he is a new creation. Old things have passed away and new things have come.

It's like you get a new set of price tags by which you evaluate everything in life and it all takes on completely opposite value. We walk in newness of life. So Paul's answer to the person who says if you just preach grace people are going to run amuck is no, because there's a real transformation that takes place. At salvation there's a regeneration, there's a new birth, there's a conversion, there's a transformation, there's a new creation, and this new person walks in a different way; walk meaning daily conduct, daily life. We die a real death. And that death is a significant thing, a significant event, with significant results. We have a new life. Psalms 40, verse 3 says we sing a new song. I mean the world doesn't understand why we gather on Sunday and sing all this kind of music. They're not interested in it, and frankly we're not that interested in theirs. We have a new song. We can enjoy the music of the world of course, depending on your preferences, your tastes, and the quality of it, and all of that. You can enjoy it for what it is like anything else God has created in His world. But it doesn't move the soul like the power of the music that is the expression of our redemption. We have a new song. Ezekiel 18 says we have a new spirit inside. Ezekiel 36 says we have a new heart. 2 Corinthians 5:17 we're a new creation. Galatians 6:15 we're a new being. Ephesians 4:24 we're a new man. Revelations 2:17 we have a new name, a new identity. Now all of a sudden we're released back into this world but we're alien to it, we're strangers to it, we're pilgrims in it. We don't belong anymore because there has been such a severe transformation. A real death has occurred, and a real resurrection has occurred and we engage ourselves in a new kind of life with all new perceptions of the world around us. We walk, to put it in the words of 1 John, in the light instead of in the darkness.

So Christ's Calvary was my Calvary and Christ's resurrection was my resurrection and I am one with Him and I am not what I used to be. Now that doesn't mean we are perfect, we still battle sin and I'll say more about that in a moment. But it does mean that I am not who I used to be. I still have to battle the sin that is around me and the sin that is in my unredeemed flesh but I am a new creation. I am not what I was. I am also not what I am going to be, but I am not what I was. Salvation, you see, isn't just adding something new to what you were. Salvation is transforming you so that you are a new man. You're not the old person you used to be and that takes us to his third point here. What happened in that day? What happened? What happened to make such a dramatic change? What happened was sin. Sin, notice it in verse 6, was done away with. The body of sin was done away with. He said knowing this that our old self was crucified with Him. The death was that our old self died when He died. It was not only a substitutionary death for our sins to pay the penalty for our sins, but in some way it was a transforming death so that out of that transaction we become new creatures.

The old self, what does that mean? That means what we used to be. What we used to be. We're not anymore. The old self, the old man Ephesians 4 calls it, was crucified. And in that crucifixion the body of sin was done away. Now what does that mean? It's the Greek verb *catargeto*. The body of sin means the entity, not talking about physical body, but sin as an entity. The entity of sin has been *catargetoed* if I can transliterate that. Now what does *catargeto* mean? Well basically it means to destroy, to do away with. In the case of Paul's usage of it, it is used about 27 times in the New Testament and 7 or 8 of those times in the book of Romans. Never is it used in the book of Romans to speak of eradication or annihilation. We can't say that since I've become a Christian sin is annihilated, right? Can't say that. It's still there in our flesh. It's still there in our humanness. And as long as we're in this human realm we'll battle sin. But a very decisive blow has been struck against sin that can be described here by the words of Paul. The body of sin is done away with. What does that mean? Well it means this. To be deprived of its effect, or better to be deprived of its strength. Or better in the case of Romans to be deprived of its dominion. That is to say to be deprived of its sovereignty.

There's one thing true about an unregenerate person, a person who doesn't know the Lord, it's this: they're dominated by sin. They're dominated by it. It is their master. It calls all the shots. Because they do not have the life of God, because they have never died to the old life, and come alive in new life. Their life is sinful, top to bottom, front to back. Not all people are as sinful as they could be. There are people who are far more sinful than others in terms of a relative sinfulness. But all people are sinful enough and sinful only to the degree that they are condemned by God. You say well what about when they do good deeds? Well, if they do them for any other motive than the glory of God they are not good deeds in the truest, purest sense. So even the good that men do because it's motive is self promotion, or the easing of one's guilt, or the desire to earn a good reputation, turns out to be something other than glorifying God and therefore falls into the category of sin. So unregenerate people don't do what is good, they just sin. They are totally dominated by sin. They are mastered by sin. But what happens when you die? It is like a slave who dies and is therefore freed from the old master. It's like Romans 7 when a spouse dies the partner that remains is free from the bond of that marriage. Paul uses that analogy as well. We were like slaves to sin. We died. And when we died sin no longer was our master. So that's the decisive, definitive death that Paul is writing about here. In verse 6 again, the body of sin is done away. And here's what that means. That we should no longer be slaves to sin, for he who has died is freed from sin. As soon as a slave dies he is free from his master, and sin was our master, and when we died we were freed from its mastery, not from its presence. Go down to verse 12.

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lust. You can, if you choose to, make sin the sovereign. But that's not necessary. That's not the way it used to be. Now it's up to you. Now it's your choice. Because the entity of sin has been rendered weak, has lost its domination, it is no longer the sovereign of our life. Look at verse 14.



Sin shall not be master over you. That's the point. Now as a believer I am free from the necessary domination of sin, I am free from the sovereignty of sin in my life, I am free from sin dominating me as some monarch, some despot controlling everything in my life. So Paul says look we don't go on sinning as Christians because we died. What does he mean by that? We were united to Jesus Christ so that we become one with Him. We therefore were united in His death, burial and resurrection. And in that death, burial and resurrection the entity of sin has been rendered no longer the sovereign of our lives so we do not live any longer under the mastery of sin. In fact would you please notice further into chapter 6, verse 16, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death or obedience resulting in righteousness, but thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin you became obedient from the heart, to that form of teaching to which you were committed, namely the Gospel, and having been freed from sin you became slaves, but this time slaves of what, of righteousness." You know what really calls the shots now in your life? Righteousness. And when you sin you have to deal with your conscience, don't you? Paul says there's a principle in me in Romans 7, there's a law in me, constantly wanting me to do what is right. I love the law of God, I want to do what God wants me to do, I want to honor God in everything, it's a battle for me, I don't do what I want to do, and I do what I don't want to do, but in me is this strong compelling, driving influence of my new self. That's what takes charge. So that sin becomes heartbreaking. Sin becomes not a fulfillment of what I really want, but a distraction from what I really want. Not a fulfillment of my deepest desires but an intrusion into the fulfillment of my deepest desires. Now all of a sudden instead of saying well, now that I'm under grace I'll just sin willy nilly and know it's all covered. All of a sudden I have a whole new longing and all I want to do is honor God and sin breaks my heart as much as it does someone around me and as it does as well the heart of God. So three truths so far: we've been immersed into Christ, therefore we've been immersed into His death, burial and resurrection. And the control, the sovereignty, the dominance of sin has been broken and we now have a choice, we now can be slaves of righteousness.

And a final point, and a very, very important one, it brings it to culmination. The fourth idea comes starting in verse 8. For if we have died with Christ and we now understand what that means, we believe that we shall also live with Him, we understand what that means to a degree. Knowing that Christ having been raised from the dead, is never to die again. Death no longer is master over Him, nor is it over us. For the death that He died He died to sin once for all, but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Now let me just pull all that together in one simple statement. We no longer live to sin, we live to God. That's the fourth point. Since we are immersed into Christ, we are immersed into His death, we are immersed into His burial, we are immersed into His resurrection. The power of sin to dominate us is broken and we now live in newness of life and we live this new life, verse 8, with Him, and verse 10 says, He lives to God. So now as we are inseparably linked to Jesus Christ who lives to the honor and glory of God so do we live. We are driven to honor God. We are driven to serve Him, to love Him, to worship Him, to praise Him, to know Him. That was what drove Paul. He wanted even so

much to be like Him. His great prayer was that he would be like Christ. His great prayer for the Christians, for all Christians, was that Christ would be fully formed in them. He said in his letter to the Corinthians be followers of me as I am of Christ. And he told the Ephesians to be followers of God and act like you're His dear children. All of a sudden the passion of our heart is to live to God, to honor God, to do His will, to serve Him, to worship Him, to praise Him, to adore Him, to glorify Him. That's what the resurrection does for us. It's totally transforming. Because in the moment of salvation we are joined to Christ, we die, we rise to walk in newness of life and that life is the life of Christ lived in us that seeks to please God. So we can say again with Paul I am crucified with Christ, the old life died. Nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me. And He's living to the glory of God in me and my life is endeavoring to line up with Him. Therein lays the great Christian understanding of transformation, of conversion, of new birth, of regeneration. That's the desire of our heart, that's the direction. We are slaves of righteousness. We have a new master and it's not sin, it's the Lord Jesus Christ. We have new longings and desires and our old lusts just get in the way. We no longer have to do what sin dictates. We have a choice. We can live and yield to righteousness. That's the significance spiritually of the role the resurrection plays in our lives. Christians are different. And it ought to be manifest to the world that we are different, shouldn't it? It ought to be manifest. While it is certainly true that the greatest testimony to the resurrection is the word of God. The greatest testimony is what is written on the pages of Scripture to verify the resurrection. But along side what Scripture says it is also true that we, who call ourselves Christians, should be living verifications of a resurrection. Is that not true? People who know us ought to be able to say to us you're not what you used to be. Your desires are different, your longings are different, your hopes are different, your ambitions are different, your perceptions are different. The way you view the world and everything in it isn't what it used to be. You are a different person. The truth is we are, because a dramatic, decisive, and effective spiritual transformation took place, at the point of salvation, when we were joined to Christ, in His death and resurrection. He closes this passage in verse 11 with just an exhortation. Even so consider yourselves to literally have died to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. What does he mean? Now you know folks. To consider simply means to reason it, to affirm it as true. That you're not what you used to be, you're not who you used to be. There has been a dramatic change in who you are. Come to a settled conviction about that. Why? Because then you'll understand your salvation, then you won't have needless fears and doubts, then you won't think yourself a victim to temptation, the world, the flesh and the devil. Then you won't worry about somehow losing what you've gained in Christ. Then you won't fear temptation because you realize that no temptation will come against you that you're not able to handle, 1 Corinthians 10 says. And God always makes a way of escape for His children. You no longer have to get into the terrible depression of being hammered by the doubts that Satan puts upon you. Understand there has been a real transformation. You're not what you were. You're not what you ought to be. And you fall short and so do I, and we grieve over that. But that does not undue our transformation. You say "well, how do I know if I'm on this side? How do I know if I've really died and risen again?" By the heart's desire, by the passion of your heart. If you're driven, consumed constantly by the need to fulfill your lusts, that's evidence that

you've never died. If on the other hand, all of those failures and sins that come into your life only get in the way of your real longings then you know you've been transformed. You have died and the new you lives. Some practical advice, verses 12 and 13. Don't let sin reign in your mortal body. Don't obey its lusts, they're still there in that flesh until you get your glorified body or until you leave this world. Don't go on presenting the members of your body, that's your mind, your voice, your mouth, the rest of your body, don't go on presenting those as instruments of unrighteousness. Don't use any of your human faculties for unrighteous purposes. But present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. You are a new creation. You have died, you are alive. Now take your members, present them to God as instruments of righteousness.

Well, not just a historical fact, the resurrection, but a spiritual reality and it's your biography and mine, if we're in Christ.

Father we thank You this morning for a great morning. Wonderful evidences of Your grace and mercy have been presented to us throughout this morning, and certainly the greatest of which is the power of the Gospel to transform so many lives. Thousands of folks here and gathered all across this world on a day like today to celebrate the resurrection. People who have died with You and come to life with You and now live a new life, and they live it to God. Father we thank You for the evident power of the Gospel demonstrated even in our congregation this morning but we know there are some here who do not know that power who are still living in sin, driven by their own desires and lusts, whose minds are dark, who do not understand divine truth, who are ignorant and who are headed for a Christ-less and Godless eternity of punishment and remorse. Father, we know that you offer, to those who come, forgiveness of sin and eternal life. You offer us this union with Christ in which we die and are born anew. Father, we pray that many would come to receive the gift from You today. And may they know that it's simply a matter of asking and humble prayer, Lord save me from my sin, forgive my sin. I believe Jesus died for me and rose again, I want Him to be Lord. Forgive my sin and save me, that simple prayer Lord. And the death takes place and the birth takes place, in an instant. And they walk in new life throughout all time and eternity. May that be the reality in lives today for Your glory in Christ's name.

Amen.

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