

**Living on the Resurrection Side of Life:  
“Resurrection Power”  
Philippians 3:10-11**

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Sing with all the Saints of Glory;  
Sing the resurrection song.  
Death and sorrow, earth’s dark story,  
To the former days belong.

For over forty years now, I have been trying to preach that sermon and sing that song. Today I would like to try once more. I take for a text the words of Paul who said, *“I want to know Christ, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection of the dead.”* What a worthy goal for any life.

**CONSIDER WITH ME THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.** *“I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.”*

Jesus got up; He got up from the grave. Do you ever wonder how it happened? Was it like a sudden bolt of lightning that brought him back to life or was it like a slow arousal from a long summer nap?

Have you ever questioned how Jesus felt about coming back? Somewhere in the bowels of that tomb did He hesitate returning to swords loud clashing, to disciples arguing over who is the greatest, to governments posturing for political gain, to people suffering from diseases of multiple names? On Good Friday, He had announced from the Cross, *“It is finished.”* If it was finished, then why go back?

Of course, nearly everyone Jesus met, in one way or another, he asked to get up and go back. He said that to the invalid who laid on that pallet for thirty-eight years, *“Get up, pick up your mat and walk!”* He said that to Zacchaeus who was hiding in a sycamore tree, *“Come down, Zacchaeus, I’m going to your house today.”* He said that to the demonic who lived in the tombs, *“Get up, go home to your family and tell them what the Lord has done for you.”*

Could the resurrected Lord be saying something like that to you? Get up from your poorly made beds and walk. Get up from you premature deaths and live. Get up from your self-pity and serve. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection!

Do you ever think about it, really think about it, the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead? We love to talk about power: horse power, man power, fire power, solar power, nuclear power, but what about the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead?

There is nothing distinctively Christian about immortality. Every religion of the world has some notion of life after death. Most leave our vague, orphaned souls wandering somewhere between earth and heaven, in search of a Nirvana where we are reunited with spirits of all time. But Christians are different. We believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. We believe these poor, lisping, stammering tongues will find new life beyond the grave and speak with clarity in the kingdom of heaven. We are not a drop in the bucket that falls lost into the sea of being. We are individual and responsible souls with resurrected bodies that return to their creator where they enjoy everlasting life. So we shout today, "Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!" I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection!

**BECAUSE CHRIST LIVES, WE SHALL LIVE ALSO.** *"...and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection of the dead."*

Abundant life is yours. Jesus said, *"I have come that they may have life,"* - life to the fullest, life to the max, abundant life, abiding life, adventuresome life."

Did you hear the old story about the guy who checked into a hotel room and immediately called the front desk in a panic? With an urgent voice he said to the clerk, "I'm stuck in my room; come help me get out of here." The calm clerk asked the man to explain the situation. "It's like this," said the man shaking. "There are three doors in this room. One opens to the closet, another opens to the bathroom and the third has a Do Not Disturb sign on it. Can you get me out of here?"

If you feel trapped, topped out, up against it, fenced in, burned out, terminally ill, you might do well to ponder the lyrics of Natalie Sleeth who said:

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;  
There's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope for you and me.  
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,  
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

A twenty-six year old wrote this note to her pastor. Today I am thanking God that I am free to keep my home, rear my children, and welcome my handsome husband home each night. We are not wealthy, but we are young and we are sure God is at work in all things for good. Personally, our family is living as close to God as we know how. Will you tell other families who may be lax or visionless to reach out and renew their experience of God?

Kenny Chesney has a new song out. The title is "Don't Blink". A 102 year-old man was being asked by a reporter the secret of his long life. The old man,

looking up from his pipe replied, “All I can say is – Don’t Blink.” Take a nap when you’re six years old and suddenly you’re twenty-five and your high school sweetheart becomes your wife. Don’t Blink – you just might miss your babies growing up like mine did, turning into moms and dads and the next thing you know your better half of fifty years is there in bed and you’re praying God takes you instead. Don’t blink. Best start puttin’ first things first; take every breath for what it’s worth. Don’t blink.

### **ETERNAL LIFE IS YOURS.**

Thornton Wilder in his play *Our Town* has one of his characters say, “I don’t care what they say with their mouths – everybody knows that something is eternal. And it ain’t houses, and it ain’t names, and it ain’t earth, and it ain’t even stars.....everybody knows in their bones that something is eternal and that something has to do with human beings. All the greatest people who ever lived have been telling us that for five thousand years and yet you’d be surprised how people are losing hold of it. There’s something way down deep that’s eternal about every human being.”

We send mission teams of youth and adults to poverty stricken areas of this country and literally around the world to Russia, to Africa, to Honduras, to Mexico. Without exception these short-term missionaries come home with the same story. In places where, humanly speaking, one could only see death and despair, the people are so incredibly happy. They love life. They rejoice together. They worship with enthusiasm. How is that possible? They believe in eternal life.

I know we have our disappointments. Max Lucado tells about accidentally discovering that his West Texas hometown owed his parents some money. As Max chased down the stray cash, his mind began to dance with what he might do with the sudden “wind fall” of profit. Maybe he could end world hunger, wipe out AIDS, solve international hatred. Then the voice on the phone said, “Yes, Mr. Lucado, looks like we owe you 3.50. After a long pause Max asks, “Three hundred fifty million, three hundred fifty thousand?” “No,” said the clerk, “Three dollars and fifty cents. It looks like your mother overpaid her final water bill by that amount.

While some of our wild fantasies have crashed against hard reality, I suspect most of us will agree that life on earth has given us better than we deserve. If not here, then over there, things will be better than we imagine. For as the scriptures say:

*“No eye has seen,  
no ear has heard,  
no mind has conceived,  
what God has prepared for those  
who love him.”*

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,  
neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor*

*anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

In our end is our beginning, in our time infinity;  
In our doubt there is believing; in our life eternity.  
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,  
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Amen.