

Growing in the Grace of God #10 - the Resurrection Covenant Part 2

by Bob Hoekstra

God wants us to know the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, which is the same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

Duration: 44:50

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 1:4, 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Resurrection Power"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on God rather than trying to manipulate situations. The focus is on the power of God and the hope that comes from knowing Him. The speaker references Romans 1:4, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of Jesus and its connection to justification and sanctification. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of knowing God through the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, and being conformed to His death.

Transcript

In study number five, the Resurrection Covenant, we've looked extensively at the relationship between the Resurrection and the New Covenant, and also have applied those realities to starting out with God and justification, new birth. Now let's allow the Scriptures to relate these Resurrection truths to going on with God, to sanctification. See how that is related to the Resurrection.

Ephesians 1, 18-20. A prayer that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. This great prayer, I pray that you may know.

These are things God wants us to know in the full sense of the word. To understand increasingly and to experience increasingly. God wants us to know resurrection power in our daily Christian lives.

He wants us to know, and to skip to the part that hits directly on our study, verse 19, what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. Not just the fact that God's power produced a resurrection that gave victory over sin and death, and that we have been

given a share in that, that is, we have a portion, Christ is our life and we can live forever. It's not just that.

This also is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us. Something God wants working on our lives, toward our lives, in and through our lives, day by day. The power of His resurrection.

I pray that you may know what is the surpassing greatness of His power. How great is this power that is working toward us, that God wants us to know. It's the same power, well, it's verse 19, the end of it, it's according to the working of His mighty power, so this is God's mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

The same power the Father used to raise His Son from death in a grave to the right hand of His throne. That's the power. Not a power that just got His Son, you know, gasping for air and able to walk around feebly, but actually took Christ from the grave and seated Him far above all principalities and power, every name, name, this age and the one to come.

We're talking about a mighty resurrection, ascension victory. See, the resurrection is even linked into the ascension. He was raised from the grave to be raised to the throne.

And there He sits, victorious, conqueror, King of kings, Lord of lords. And Ephesians 2, we've been raised and seated with Him in heavenly places. And increasingly, God wants to exercise that power toward us and on our lives so that we know those things.

Not just have a mental comprehension of them, but know in the sense of walk in. Adam knew Eve. He didn't know about her, he knew her.

And she bore fruit. Not by his thoughts about her. Not because he just knew she was there.

He knew her. God wants us to know these things. He wants us to enter into the reality of them.

That's the true knowledge of God. Enter into the reality of them. He wants us to know this great exceeding greatness of His power toward us.

Isn't it easy to think of the Christian life and how much energy it seems it can sap sometimes? And sometimes all we're aware of working is our feeble striving and struggling. Oh, boy, this rock of Gibraltar is hard to carry. Boy, this mountain is hard to move.

And we're so aware of the energy we're expending. And again, not to say at all that we don't get totally involved in this whole life of grace. We're vessels in the hands of God.

No, they're being used of God. And that we're one with Him and what He's doing. We're feeling and going through.

But the source of the energy, the source of the life, the dynamic behind it all, isn't our greatest shove. It's this power. I mean, this is a whole different view of the Christian life.

God wants us to know the exceeding greatness of His power toward us. It's too easy to think of His power that raised Christ. Yes, Christ is victorious.

Victory over sin and death. He's at the right hand of the Father. Praise God for resurrection power.

Yeah, but that very power God wants to unleash toward us in our deadness, in our inability, in our impossibilities, in our challenges, in our opportunities, in our visions, in our walk. See, this is a word for daily living. This is a prayer to grow in the things of God.

The spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of Him, verse 17. Then the eyes of our understanding are enlightened to the extent that we know these things. We walk in them.

We live by them. They become a reality to us. We're talking here, sanctification, growth, relationship, development.

Oh, what a radically different perspective this is on the Christian life. It changes everything. When by the eye of faith, when with a heart of trust, we see this and count on this, it's like, what can possibly be too impossible? What could possibly be too big? What could possibly be too hard? Then it's just a matter of more and more, Lord, what is Your will? Yes, You can do it.

And if I see Your will in the Word and see something obviously obstructing it, oh Lord, I know there's a power here. And it can work toward me. We're not talking little boosts, you know.

Thanks, Lord. This is the same power the Father used to raise the Son from death to the place of victory, above the enemy. Why? This is a power that can make the enemy's work toward us ineffective.

Why? In a sense, we're out of reach. We're no match for Him. I see you down there.

Seated up here in heavenly places. I know you'd like to get ahold of me, but praise God. You can't reach here.

I just sit here with the Lord. I just count on this power working toward me, keeping me out of your reach. Tremendous reality to meditate upon.

I say meditate upon, because often that's where our faith grows. Just chew this over with God. Wow, Lord.

Is that the way I'm living? Am I living by the exceeding greatness of Your power toward me, the one who believes in You? Power that's according to the working of Your mighty power Power that's used in Christ, taken from the grave to the throne. Lord, oh Lord, I want to know that power. I want to live by that power, rest in that power, confide in that reality, count on that.

Going on with God, victorious Christian living, powerful Christian living, oh, how it's anchored into the resurrection. Sanctification, walk, growth, service, it's anchored in the resurrection. Philippians 3, see some more of the same thing.

The resurrection and its relationship to going on with God, growing, serving, being made more and more like the Lord, sanctification. Philippians 3.10, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Intriguing verses, again including here, the resurrection. God wants us to know Him. And this gives us a real tip-off on what this word, know, means.

Because we know God doesn't want us just to catalog a lot of facts about Him. We know that. He wants an interacting, trusting, loving relationship to grow like a father and a son, a parent and a child, a shepherd

and a sheep.

Know is not cataloging a bunch of facts. It's an experiential entering into a reality of facts that can be known, but then can be lived by and walked in. That I may know Him Experiencing a growing acquaintanceship with God was the passion of Paul's heart that I may know Him.

I think if we could ask Paul, how could you narrow down your prayer requests? If you just had one thing you want me to pray for you about, Paul, what would you pray? Pray that I may know Him. Okay, okay, I'll do that. Now tell me, what's the purpose of your life in ministry? Give me some perspective there.

That I may know Him. That I may know Him. It covers it all.

It gets right to the heart of it and everything out on the circumference is to be related to that heart. Getting to know the Lord better, getting acquainted with Him. How? That I may know Him and, and that little conjunction there is in the sense of even, in fact, it could be translated even legitimately.

That I may know Him, even, and this is what will be involved in me knowing Him. Knowing Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. Three arenas there described, these are not four things that we're trying to do, you know, knowing Him, and then the resurrection and suffering and death.

It's three arenas in which we do the one thing. In fact, by the way, this context goes on into verse 13, Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, I haven't grabbed everything God grabbed me for, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. I press toward the goal.

What is the goal? Knowing Him. Knowing Him. The one thing Paul did was pressed on to know the Lord.

That was his whole goal in life. That covered everything. That produced in him growth, fruit, maturity, faith.

I press toward the goal. The goal is to know Him for the prize. What's the prize? Everything that accrues from knowing Him.

Every heavenly spiritual benefit that flows out of knowing Him. The prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. What's the upward call of God? Come get to know me.

Come get to know me. Come follow me. Come get to know me.

It's the one thing, it was the passion, the center, it was His life. To me to live is Christ. Not working for Him, it is Christ.

Out of that comes work, fruit, growth, faith, relationship. That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection. Now if we took a poll on what's our favorite of these three ways to know God, I wonder which one would win.

The power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His suffering, or conformity to His death? A. Yes, I'm with you, really. Lord, just keep us capped there on A. And you know, that is exactly our first experiential knowledge of God, is the power of His resurrection. We believe in the Lord Jesus, we're raised from the dead.

And new life, and you know that buoyancy, that lightness, it's like, whew, I'm alive. Where did that 10,000 ton load go that I was carrying? It's resurrection life. We taste of that.

And that's our first intimate, real knowledge of God and salvation. The power of His resurrection. Raised from sin and death.

And it's glorious. One of the sad things is, sometimes nobody gave us a clue that it was going to be a little different than that sometimes. You know? You're first saved.

I remember a gal in Dallas, Texas, next door to us was this Roman Catholic family. And oh, the wife and the mother of these, I can't remember if it was four or five kids. They were pretty energetic, seemed like 10.

Oh, she had a hunger for God. So open, loved to talk about God. Oh, she had a heart for God.

God had worked in her many ways. And when my wife, Deanie, eventually shared the gospel with her, she just kind of was like, what other choice is there? I mean, why haven't I heard this before? It was just terrific. And then one by one, the whole clan was getting saved.

One day she brought her kid sister over. You talk about fruit falling off the tree in your lap. You know? Sometimes you think, what are we going to share and how are we going to share? Should I share this or not that? Sometimes really overworking the whole thing.

And we just shared a few basic verses, John 3, 16, and a couple of others. And she was just, oh, yes! I want that. I need that.

And how do you get this? Well, you just believe and receive. Well, let's do it. So we just prayed together with her.

And when we stopped praying, she just started smiling. Then she'd chuckle a little bit. And then she'd smile.

Then she'd chuckle a little bit. She was just beaming. I thought she was going to go into, you know, this kind of contorted, you know.

It's going to cross over in the back. I mean, joy was just beaming out of her face. And she kept saying things like, this is so fantastic.

I can't believe this is so simple and so real. I mean, she's just bubbling over, you know. Joy inexpressible and full of glory.

The resurrection, it's so real when we meet the Lord. That's what it is. It's just an infusion into our very being that was dead of resurrection life.

And we get to know the Lord. Oh, yes, He's real. He's alive.

He's cleansed me. I'm clean. I'm forgiven.

I'm out from the grave. But there's more to getting to know the Lord than the glory hallelujah moments, though I say glory hallelujah for the glory hallelujah moments. There's more to it.

Somewhere along the way, you're sharing that joy with someone, and they're not as excited as you were. They don't want to hear it as much as you did. Before you know it, you're an object of some persecution and suffering.

I must have fallen from grace or something. God must have cut me off. I must have lost it all.

No, that's just part of it. You were supposed to name it and claim it. Yeah, really.

That's right. They didn't teach me that. It's eaten me alive.

It's painful. We get to know the Lord in a fellowship of His suffering, a sharing in common, a partnership, and entering into things He went through. We realize what's involved to walk with the Lord sometimes is exceedingly painful and discouraging.

And we too might cry out in our own maybe misunderstanding way, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Or we might be in our little Gethsemane before that crying out, sweating as it were drops of blood. Sure, not exactly like Jesus, but as big as we can handle. Different cups coming toward us of challenge or impossibility or disappointment or sometimes just overwhelming opportunity that you feel so inadequate for and you're just like, oh.

But suffering, that's part of it too. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He knew what it was to weep. We don't have a high priest who cannot be touched by our infirmities. He knows what it is to be a human being in a sin-scarred, God-ignoring, even God-blaspheming world.

And we get a little taste of that and we get to know our Lord better, what He went through, what the life of righteousness and godliness is really about, that it goes against everything in the world and much that's in the church world. And there's a fellowship, a getting to know Him there, a calling upon Him, an appreciating Him and needing Him. And then we get where almost nobody ever told us we'd get, maybe a conformity to His death.

We get in those places where everything seems to be dying or if God doesn't do something, it's as though everything, including us, were dead. Like Jesus on the cross, in the tomb. You feel forsaken, though you aren't.

And Jesus ultimately wasn't, though the Father, yes, did look from the sin He took upon Him, but He was going to raise Him. And He'll raise us, but it may seem like dying. And we get in those times and we do a lot of bizarre theologies that make it sound like you can say it right, do it right, think it right, or protect yourself, and it'll be nothing but resurrection power enjoyed all the time.

It's a perversion of the Christian life. It doesn't even look at the life of Christ with open eyes, you know. And we get to know the Lord, though, in those times.

We get entombed, as it were. We get cut off, isolated, helpless in the feeling of hopelessness. And if you've been walking with the Lord very long, you've either been there.

In fact, I'd be amazed if there weren't some in our group right now that feel like they're in the tomb. Really, I'd be amazed. I mean, you know, just burden, joy.

What's joy? I'm just trying to, you know, a gasp of air to go another step is victory, you know. And I know looking at the Word of God, looking at Christ's life, the apostles and others, this is part of the Christian life. My own testimony also would be that I found it that way, too.

I'm not talking the times where I messed up bad and, see, Jesus got in these spots. He never did anything wrong. I'm not talking about suffering after the flesh.

That's something we're to increasingly grow out of. That's not something to increasingly anticipate. That's something to decreasingly anticipate as God works, you know.

Not that the flesh is gone, but we walk less and less according to it, more and more according to the Spirit. But Jesus totally all the time walked according to the Spirit. Look what he went through.

Suffering, misunderstanding, persecution. He ended up in a tomb. Well, when we're in a tomb, and it's totally hopeless unless God Himself does something, you know.

I mean something where you can't go on the seminar trail giving a, how I got out of the tomb in seven easy steps. If you got out, you weren't in there. You were in a briar bush or something.

You weren't in the tomb. The tomb is a place of death, impossibility. I mean, what did Lazarus do to get out of his tomb? Can you see Lazarus on the circuit, you know, giving speeches at banquets? How I got out of the tomb.

What did he do? He responded to a voice that gave him life and called him out. I mean, what did he do? He came out. It was obvious.

He hopped out. He hopped out from a word the Lord gave. And even he needed to be unwrapped, you know.

Death all around him. All these are ways to get to know the Lord. Boy, oh, I tell you, when you're in the tomb, you know what is soon going to come though? Another acquaintanceship with God through the power of His resurrection.

And I tell you, in like 31 years with the Lord, I've had three or four major entombments. Now I'm just in the fellowship of his sufferings right now. Thank you, Lord.

Suffering never looks so good when you know the tomb is there. Wow, brother, I tell you, it's so real. That happens.

You can see it. Well, we'll see it in a minute in Paul's life. But the Lord is the one who raises you from the tomb.

It's the Lord. And when He raises you from the tomb, it has an impact on your relationship with Him. You get to know Him.

It's one thing to say, I believe in a God of resurrection. Jesus, Lazarus, in, you know, yes. How about in your life right now in that deadness? Boy, when God raises you from something where if it depended on you, you'd never get out of it.

It has an impact on your faith. In those times of entombment, I tell you, the toughest one of all was the first one. And I don't like them.

I'm not looking for another one. If I never have another one, the last time I was entombed was, well, it was 12, 13 years ago. I've lost track.

I don't think about it a lot. I'm just glad it's back there. But I tell you, the toughest one was the first one.

Because a tomb, you think it's all over. I mean, dead. No way.

Faith? Spent. Hope? Crushed. Ability to function? Cannot find it.

I tell you, when the Lord calls you out, you know He did it. You know He did it. You know you didn't do it.

And you know, again, in a new, fresh way, you serve a God of resurrection. And you know, it kind of changes you, in a way, that knowledge of God. Because one of the great threats of the enemy is, I'll bury you.

The physical death to everyone and to the believer, I'll bury you. You think you serve God, I'll bury you. It's kind of like, well, there's always resurrection, you know.

I mean, so He does. It's not all over if He buries me. There's resurrection.

In every one of these aspects, we get to know God. And that's what it's about, that I may know Him. That resurrection is critical.

The resurrection is where we start out, and sometimes along the way, it's where we need to see another mighty demonstration of it. Paul went through such. This is not fanciful thinking.

This is not reading our experience into the Word. Look at 2 Corinthians 1. The Apostle Paul, next to the Lord Jesus Christ, perhaps the strongest example of faith, obedience, trust, and service in the New Testament. 2 Corinthians 1, 8-10.

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia. Boy, that's not the American church leadership way. We want people ignorant of our troubles if we are in leadership.

We want them to think, you know, we're Moses with the veil on. Well, I'm getting ahead. That's a few weeks down the road.

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble. We don't need to hide our struggles from each other, our impossibilities. Our trouble which came to us in Asia.

How serious was the trouble? Look at this. That we were burdened beyond measure, excessively. Above strength.

No resource left to deal with it personally. So that we despaired even of life. Hopelessness had set in.

Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, inside. It was deadness. And we're talking an entombment here.

But look at this next word, that. I remember in one of my entombments, I was reading this passage. And that day, I remember I was reading the New American Standard, which translates that little Greek connective hena, in order that.

In order that. That little phrase. My heart leaped when I read it.

See, when you're dying, and you think it's all over, you think it's pointless. Going nowhere can produce nothing. It's a dead end.

But notice, that. All of this dying was that. Or, in order that.

There was purpose in it. That's the astounding thing. In order that what? We should not trust in ourselves.

But God, who raises the dead. You know what it is, really, that keeps us from trusting God, is so often? Self-trust. Trusting in ourselves.

Depending on what we can do. Again, we're back to what Jesus said. You want to follow me? Deny yourself.

Take up your cross, daily. Follow me. To really grow in trusting the Lord, so often, the Lord sees he must purge us of some measures of self-trust.

Not cruelly, but lovingly. He knows we can only live by faith, and he sees what obstructs faith in him. It's usually confidence in ourselves.

Sometimes it's in others, or something, but it's not in him. Well, there's nothing, it seems, that purges self-trust like an entombment or a major suffering. That we should not trust in ourselves.

God wants us trusting in the God who raises the dead. Well, to the extent that we feel, sense, look like, or circumstantially are buried, that kind of purges self-trust. Self-trust is kind of like, hey, I can't handle this.

I can't deal with this. And God says, now, reconsider who I am. I'm a God who raises the dead.

Verse 10, who delivered us. God delivered us from so great a death. God delivered him.

God proved he raised the dead. It's one thing to say, my God's the God of resurrection. It's another thing to say, my God has raised me from circumstantial deadness, spiritual deadness, personal inability, deadness, you name it.

Who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us. In whom we trust that he will still deliver us. When God raises us, it builds an expectation and confidence of what he can do.

Now, obviously, we're not talking about Paul's birth into the kingdom. We're talking about growth and the agonies of growth. We're talking about sanctification, walk, being shaped and prepared and matured and developed.

Here it's tied into the resurrection. Paul's deadness and God's raising of the dead. And this is not talking again about the final resurrection or resurrection and new birth.

He's talking about God raised him from his deadness, from his sentence of death. And he can do the same in our lives. And often those that we're ministering to, that's right where they are.

They're being purged of self-trust by a loving Heavenly Father. And rather than give them seven steps to wiggle out of their grave clothes and roll the stone away. These are great verses to read, you know.

We serve a God who raises the dead. Real hope is stirred by who God is and what he can do. Not some new idea on how we might manipulate the situation.

Well, in conclusion, they're being purged of self-trust by a loving Heavenly Father. And rather than give them seven steps to wiggle out of their grave clothes and roll the stone away. These are great verses to read, you know.

We serve a God who raises the dead. Real hope is stirred by who God is and what he can do. Not some new idea on how we might manipulate the situation.

Well, in conclusion, let's go to the bottom of that list in conclusion. Romans 1-4 The resurrection and the new covenant. Justification and sanctification tied into it.

Romans 1-4 The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was a mighty, a powerful, ultimate statement of God. That Jesus was God the Son. That he was the only begotten Son of the Eternal Father.

Powerful declaration of his deity. Let's go up one. Acts 4 verses 1 and 2. Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them.

The disciples are preaching. Here come the temple guard, the priests, the religious hierarchy. Being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

Who is it confronting the disciples now as they preach the resurrected Christ? It's the religious establishment. Dead religion. The resurrection message concerning Jesus Christ is the difference between life and dead religion.

And it disturbs those who are in dead religion. Yes? I think they always rebuild any time you mention the deity of Christ. That's when they got off.

Yes. And the resurrection, according to Romans 1.4, being the ultimate statement of his deity. Even though they couldn't put it all together theologically, but this man couldn't have risen from the dead.

Because if he did, whoa, it changed everything. Exactly. And they were heavy into their dead religious system.

This was the religious hierarchy. But it's been like this down through the ages. Those who want to live by the Spirit, by the resurrection, oh, they're going to be on a head-on collision with those who want to live by the flesh, and live by ritual, and live by religious authority, and earning, and merit, and all of that.

Sometimes it's not popular. I mean, if we shared in some places in the church world this study tonight, and said there's going to be more next week, it might be a real quick way to clear out the house. Even maybe get chewed on heavy on the way out.

At least verbally stoned. I mean, this message is still not popular to the religious flesh of man. And I think the Lord wants us not to be shocked if our hope is a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, not only for new birth, but for strength and victory day by day.

Because those who are committed to walking under the letter of the law, or living according to the flesh, sometimes even in the evangelical church world, just tell me what God wants and I'll give it my all. Don't give me all this stuff. Again, how do you do the resurrection anyway? Well, you don't.

It's done. You either believe in it, or you struggle on your own. Those are our choices.

And this kind of struggle that Jesus met with the religious authorities that were deeply into the flesh, and of course, the implication for us too is, what we want is God the Son. We want God producing a life in us. Not us producing a life for God.

And that's the same kind of implication. They didn't want exactly what we need. God living in us, producing a life.

Then last, Matthew 22. Matthew 22. Matthew 22.

This amazing parable here has a real implication for our study, I think. Matthew 22-23. The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, well, this is how conniving the religious flesh is, came to Him and asked Him.

And you know the story, He's asking about Teacher Moses, a man dies, no children, the brother marries the wife, and then He goes through all these, you know, one brother after another dies. You know, they're really setting Jesus up here, aren't they? Boy, He'll never get out of this. And then they ask in verse 28, Therefore, in the resurrection, which we don't believe in, you know, whose wife? What hypocrisy! And what foolishness too! Which one will get her in the resurrection? Boy, this is an important issue, and there's surely no answer.

And all the while, they're as phony as can be. That's the way the flesh is. But look at this answer.

Jesus answered and said to them, You're mistaken, not knowing two things. The Scriptures, nor the power of God. Not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

Let's apply that to our study tonight. The tragedy of not knowing the Scriptures, and not knowing the power of God. Not knowing how the Scriptures relate resurrection power to the Christian life is a similar major mistake.

I mean, there are many believers who are as weak in their own Christian walk as these Sadducees were in their confronting of Jesus. They had nothing. It was just a bunch of hot air.

Their own reasoning, very clever. Thinking they've fooled Jesus and His answer. Here's why you're mistaken, He says.

You don't know the Scriptures, nor the power of God. Many, many believers are ignorant of the Scriptures on this issue of the resurrection and its pertinence to daily Christian living. Consequently, they don't know the power of God in their daily living.

You can look at the Sadducees and go, Boy, how dumb they were. How futile they were. And then, we don't even know we're doing the same thing in our Christian life.

Ignorant of the Scriptures and not knowing the power of God. And sure, there you see that brought them to zero, to bankruptcy. I mean, the whole thing was absolute futile foolishness.

But if we walk in the Christian life not knowing what the Scriptures say about the resurrection, which is the power of God for daily Christian living, then, as far as living the Christian life, we're as inept, weak, as futile as they were. In conclusion, one last thought. The Christian life and the resurrection.

The New Covenant gives us access to the divine eternal life of the Lord, His victory. In new birth, through faith in Jesus Christ, we get God's gift of resurrection life. But more critical for most Christians, because we know the new birth requires the resurrection.

Christ isn't raised, there is no life. More important for most of us is the implication of the resurrection and going on with God. The New Covenant makes provision for the resurrection power of God to be at work every day in our walk with God as we trust in, depend on, look to, and count upon Him.

And you know, it's not always a bombastic, raw, raw, cymbals clanging and everybody going, Whoa! It's probably very often, much like a parable God has built into creation, a visible one you see every springtime. We're out of a dead-looking climate. Snow, no leaves, no buds, no life.

Here starts coming this life. Just a little bud here, a little one there, a little blossom, a little bloom, a blade of grass, a weed, forcing its way up through a crack, splitting cement. And you can see examples of that where boulders have been moved by that relentless, quiet, slow move of life that God's built into creation.

You can see rocks split. You can see amazing things happen. And you look, you know, How did that tree get there? And that sidewalk like that? That building, that wall that was there is now over here and like that.

The only thing that can bear on it was the force of life. What a parable of the resurrection life of Christ in us, just quietly working, you know, day by day, trusting in Him and the force of divine life is kind of working through our walk, you know. Changing this, bending that, breaking that out, bringing fruit, you know.

And ultimately you can see in so many situations even cement, even weed killer. You know, all these things. Life just keeps coming.

But when you think of the life that's in us, that's a weak illustration. Because there is no remedy against that life except unwillingness to abide in it, count on it, depend on it, look to it. It's resurrection life.

And it works great in those who are dead like us on our own. It works great in a world that's dead everywhere you look. It looks and works great in dead circumstances, dead hearts, discouragement, on and on.

Let's pray together. Lord, we thank You that we've been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Lord, we want to know that great power that works toward us, the power You use to raise Jesus from the dead to the throne.

Lord, teach us what it is to live by faith, trust in You, depend on You, not hope in ourselves, but put our confidence increasingly in You, a God of resurrection. And Lord, for any who are struggling at the door of a tomb or wrapped up and laid out, just let them know that their God is a God who raises the dead. In Him they can rest.

In Him they can put hope. And He will prove Himself faithful. And for those rejoicing in the power of the resurrection, Lord, may the joy be glory to You and strength to their faith and encouragement to others, we

pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. God bless you.

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