

# Sufficiency for Godly Living #6 - Resurrected Living by God's Sufficiency

by Bob Hoekstra

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*Resurrected living is a life empowered by the resurrection power of God, available to us through faith in Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:00:45

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:7, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 2:14, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Ephesians 1:19

**Topics:** "Resurrected Life", "Godly Living"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the challenges and burdens that believers may face in their lives. He emphasizes that even great leaders like Jesus and Paul experienced difficulties and hardships. The speaker shares a personal story about a family who came to know the Lord and highlights the transformation that occurred when they embraced a relationship with Jesus rather than religious practices. He also shares his own experience of feeling hopeless and dead in his ministry until a young man approached him with an opportunity to teach a home Bible study, which ultimately brought him out of his despair. The sermon concludes with the speaker reflecting on the power of God to call believers out of their metaphorical tombs, just as Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb.

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## Transcript

Well, this is study number six in our six studies on God's sufficiency for godly living. God calls us to walk uprightly with him, to walk in a path of godliness, not indulging the flesh, not into self, but pleasing and honoring and serving the Lord. A godly path is what we're called to.

We're not spending a lot of time in this series of studies looking at what the godly path is to be like, though we have given some attention to that along the way. We're giving major attention, though, to where do you find the sufficient resource to walk in a godly life. Our emphasis is upon God's sufficiency for godly living.

This study, number six, is about resurrected living by God's sufficiency. I think the Lord is going to show us in his word in this study that the best life you and I can muster up will never be adequate for what God calls us to walk in, because that's natural life, that's human life, that may be dedicated and zealous and all of that, but there is a resurrected life available for us in Christ. Resurrected living by God's sufficiency.

This is about learning to live by the sufficiency of God and how that enables us to increasingly walk in a resurrection type of life, a life sustained and energized by the resurrection power of God daily available to us. This, again, speaks of the issues we have seen before in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 5 and 6. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as servants of the new covenant. Not of the letter, but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life, and the life the Spirit gives is resurrection life.

The new covenant is the new covenant of grace, God's new arrangement for living, the new and living way. Not the old deadness of the law, not the deadness of human striving and the resources of the flesh, but the Spirit gives life. The new covenant is a covenant of the Holy Spirit, a covenant of the grace of God poured out by the Holy Spirit, and in that grace of God is provision for resurrected living.

We were dead in Adam, and in our own human resources there is deadness, but there is a way to walk a resurrection type of life. We are not sufficient for that. You don't just try hard enough until resurrection life bursts forth.

By faith and dependence you tap into the flowing source of resurrection life, which is found in Jesus Christ. This is another aspect of the provisions of life under the new covenant of the grace of God. Jesus said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you, the blood of Jesus Christ, not only forgiving our sins, but securing for us a glorious arrangement, covenant, way to walk with God that makes the resurrection life of Jesus Christ our resource to draw on daily.

That's where our sufficiency flows from, and it's a sufficiency to produce a new kind of life, a resurrection life, a life empowered by the resurrection power of God. Now that's by way of introduction, just to orient our perspective on where we're going in the Word. In this matter of resurrected living by God's sufficiency, let's think for a few moments about the resurrection and the new covenant, how they go together like hand in hand, hand in a glove.

Luke chapter 22, Luke 22, the resurrection and its relationship to the new covenant, which is the arrangement under which we walk and live with the Lord in forgiveness of sins and newness of life. Luke 22 verse 14, when the hour had come, he, Jesus, sat down and the 12 apostles with him. Then he said to them, with fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

For I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Then he took the cup and gave thanks and said, take this and divide it among yourselves. For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them saying, this is my body which is given for you, do this in remembrance of me. Likewise, he also took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you. This is the last Passover feast the Lord observed before the cross.

This became the first Lord's supper that he instituted for us. That we would in remembrance of him take the bread and the cup. The bread reminding us of his body, the perfect sacrifice lamb that went in our place.

The blood, he went in our place all the way to death. The priceless blood of the Son of God that washes us from every sin. We're to take that in remembrance of him, but he spoke of partaking of all of that with us

someday again.

But he was just about to die. Implied in this very special passage about the new covenant, which is really about the Lord's supper, describing that great covenant and how it was purchased. Jesus spoke of partaking again and there's the implied aspect of the resurrection.

The only way the Lord could ever partake of this again with his followers, with us, with you, with me, with all of us who believe in him, would be if there would be a resurrection intervening between this time and when he would partake. The resurrection is here implied as the new covenant is taught. But there's a tighter relationship, not just subtly implied, a tighter relationship between the resurrection and the new covenant.

First Corinthians 15, perhaps the classic resurrection passage in the New Testament. First Corinthians 15, thinking further about the relationship between the resurrection and the new covenant. First Corinthians 15, 1 through 4, speaks of the gospel.

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. That is just a momentary emotional reaction but did not walk on by faith, showing the reality of that new relationship. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

Here are the essential aspects of the gospel, the good news. It involves the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures, promised in the Scriptures, described by the Scriptures, fulfilled the message of the Scripture in Jesus' life, resurrected Savior and Lord. That's the gospel.

That's the good news. Now how critical is this good news to the gospel? And the gospel is the gospel of the grace of God. To say the new covenant and the gospel of God's grace is just synonymous, saying the same thing two different ways.

The new covenant is God's provision of grace for forgiveness and new life. And the resurrection is critical to it. How critical? Look at verse 14.

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty. No reason to have a message about the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, forgiveness and life in Christ if Christ is not risen. If Christ is not risen, our preaching is empty.

It's just one more dead religious message about one more dead religious leader. That is not the case with Christ. The gospel is based upon a risen Christ.

The good news that Jesus, the Lord and Savior, is alive today. Verse 17, and if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins. If Christ was not raised from the dead, the Christian faith, faith placed in the Lord Jesus would be futile, empty, vain, pointless.

We would still be in our sins. We would still be dead in our sins if Christ had not been raised from the dead. If Jesus were still in a tomb somewhere, our sins would still be unforgiven.

It would just be evidence of just another religious leader dying with a message he couldn't fulfill. We needed someone who would go through death for us, but come out the other side victorious over sin and death. One who would prove to be God in the flesh, not just a martyr dying for a cause.

Well, we're not still in our sins because, verse 20, but now Christ is risen from the dead. Christ is alive. The Lord Jesus is risen.

And that's the gospel. That's the good news. That's critical to the good news.

Luke 22, at the Lord's Supper, the resurrection is implied as essential as a part of the new covenant. In 1 Corinthians 15, the new covenant is spoken of as the gospel. The resurrection is declared as essential.

Without the resurrection, there's no good news. There's no gospel. There is no new covenant.

It is purchased by the shed blood of one who would rise again, proving, Romans 1, verse 4, with power through the resurrection to be the Son of God. God dying for us, not just a man, but a man who is God in the flesh. Thereby his death, not just one man for one, but the very Godhead participating in that death, Jesus the Son of God, an infinite value in his shed blood, covering the sins of us all.

Verse 57, 1 Corinthians 15, 57, but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Victory over sin and death is ours through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We could not hope to go beyond the grave without the resurrection of the Lord.

We could not hope to have forgiveness of sins without the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. But now Christ is risen and we can now sing in our hearts, thanks be to God who gives us the victory. Spiritual victory is not something we achieve or establish.

It is something that is given to us. In other words, it is a gift of the grace of God. So the resurrection is essential to the gospel, to the new covenant life we are called to walk in.

One more connection between the resurrection and the new covenant before we proceed. Remember a little bit further, 2 Corinthians 2, 2 Corinthians 2, verse 14, now thanks be to God who gives us the victory in Christ. Another song of thanksgiving, 1 Corinthians 15, 57, thanks giving for the victory that is in Christ.

Here, thanks giving to God for leading us in that resurrection victory. Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ. God leads his servants in resurrection victory.

What servants? The servants of the new covenant, the very context here. Next chapter, 2 Corinthians 3, 6, God who also made us sufficient as servants of the new covenant. New covenant servants are always led in resurrection victory whenever, whenever they let the Lord do the leading.

We follow humanity, follow the world, the flesh or the devil, or we are in charge. We are not letting the Lord lead. We are stumbling around in defeat no matter what it looks like, no matter what it feels like.

But whenever we let the Lord lead, he always leads us in his triumph in Christ. Whether it looks triumphant or feels triumphant is beside the point. If we are actually, really, by faith letting him lead, we know what he is doing.

Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph, the resurrection victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that is some of the connection, the first implied and then very tight and applied connection between the

resurrection and the new covenant. The new covenant is a covenant of resurrection.

It is a relationship, an arrangement based on the reality of the resurrection. That is the backdrop. That is the foundation for the things we will look at now.

Let's start to relate this to the two major arenas of living before God, our starting point and then our going on with him, our meeting him and then getting acquainted with him, our birth and then our growth. Let's use two of the great New Testament biblical words, justification and sanctification. First the resurrection and justification.

The resurrection is totally tied into justification. Justification could not take place without the resurrection. Justification, being declared justified, being declared righteous, being declared just, not guilty, innocent.

What a glorious, gracious work of God. We know our own guilt and sin. Because of that we cannot come into the presence of God, be a part of the family of God, know God now or live with him forever.

We have to be justified, declared righteous, innocent, not guilty. That can only take place by the grace of God and it is directly connected to the resurrection. 1 Peter 1.3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again, literally caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ all based on his abundant mercy and we have been born again to a living hope. Our justification, being declared righteous in the sight of God through faith in Christ includes new birth and its new birth to a living hope, a living hope. Remember New Testament, biblical hope is not the cross your fingers kind of hope.

We use the word hope that way. I hope it will happen and I don't have a clue. I don't know if anybody knows why we have got this cross your fingers thing.

It is like the moment the fingers cross it, what happens? Zap! I mean does that change anything? We have got all these crazy things based on superstition and luck and all kinds of things that have zero to do with the kingdom of heaven. If we don't cross our fingers in the kingdom of heaven we might clasp our hands and cry out to God. But that is the way we use hope.

Well I hope so. How is the weather going to be? You hope it is going to be good. How are things going with your mate? Well I hope it gets better.

Jesus is called the blessed hope. What does that mean? Well we hope he comes back. No way.

No way. He is the blessed hope because the word hope in the New Testament means guarantees, cause for expectation, basis of certainty. Those are synonymous thoughts with New Testament hope.

He is the blessed hope because he is the blessed certainty. The absolute happy guarantee that he is coming back. And we are born again to a living hope, to guarantees, certainties, cause for expectation that is living.

Born again to a living hope. New life in Christ, second birth, spiritual birth is to a living hope, an expectation of blessing and provision and future that is based on resurrection life. Born again to a living hope.

What kind of living hope? Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. What gives a living hope to us that is an expectation pulsating with life abundant is, it is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is resurrection hope.

It is expectation based on resurrection. Oh what a reality. Coming out of death to life, out of defeat to victory.

That is the kind of hope we have. Born again to a living hope. Expectation based on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Resurrected life is now our portion because we have believed in Jesus Christ. New life through the resurrection. Justification raises you and I who were dead in trespasses and sins to newness of life.

Resurrected life. I was teaching on this subject once at one of the campuses of the Calvary Chapel Bible College and this dear sister was looking at me kind of perplexed and at break time she said, why do we need resurrection life? I encourage you just to hang on and think the Lord at shore and after break time we were referring to Ephesians 2 which says and you were dead in trespasses and sins. We don't just need sort of a religious reformation.

We need a personal resurrection. And that is what we get in Christ. A raising from the dead to newness of life.

Resurrection life. And too many of us who have come alive in Christ on the basis of his resurrection, after that try to establish a Christian life by our own resolutions, our own resolves, our own vows, our own promises, our own resources, our own sufficiency. We get raised to newness of life and then we try to build a life in the old ways, on the old resources, the same resources anyone can draw on because everyone gets them from Adam.

Christian life is a resurrection life. That life can only be found in a resurrected Lord. And that resurrection life that can only be found in a resurrected Lord can only be built and developed following a resurrected Lord.

Think of that. The Christian life is not just a religious new leaf we turn over. Or we join the religious club and get into new activities and new vocabulary.

No, no. The Christian life is a resurrection life. You take the resurrection out, you can't start the life.

You're born again through that resurrection. But you take the resurrection out of daily Christian living, there's no way to find the sufficient resources to live the life we're called to because it's a resurrection life. It's got to be walked the same way we started.

The growth of that life has to come the same way the birth came. And that is tied into resurrection. Now I think we would all agree that the resurrection and justification are totally tied together.

To put it another way, you can't get born again apart from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and faith in that risen Lord who died and rose again on our behalf. But as we've implied already in introductory words and little implications along the way, now the rest of our time we're going to just stay on one issue. And time and time again come at it in different directions and that's this, the relationship between the resurrection and sanctification.

Not justification now, but sanctification. Justification is related to new birth, starting out with God, meeting the Lord, beginning with God. Sanctification is related to growing in the Lord, walking on with the Lord, getting acquainted with the Lord.

Justification is the starting point by faith in Jesus God declaring us not guilty, innocent, righteous in His sight, the gift of His grace through the risen Lord Jesus. But what is to follow that? A life of just trying our best, making our greatest verbal commitments? What is it all about? It's still tied in to the resurrection. The resurrection is also directly related to the progressive path of sanctification.

That is, growing up in Christ, becoming more like Christ, maturing, bearing fruit, abounding in good works. All of that is the life of sanctification. Being set apart literally more and more to the purposes, the glory, and the use of God.

That's what sanctification means. And that cannot take place day by day without this glorious implication of the reality of the resurrection and resurrection power in daily Christian living. This is the heart of our study number six, resurrected living by God's sufficiency.

Not just resurrected birthing. We are birthed, born again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But our daily Christian living is also to draw on the benefits of the resurrection.

Let's see how. Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1, the resurrection and sanctification. That is daily Christian living.

Ephesians 1.18, part of a great prayer in the New Testament. 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. Three things are prayed about there.

For purposes of our study we are only going to look at one of them. But three things are prayed about there. The hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and then third, the exceeding greatness of His power toward us.

We are going to concentrate on that third one. But notice the very thrust of the prayer. A prayer that the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened to this end.

Our eyes would be opened up. We would understand, get God's light shining on the issue that we may know. That is, understand unto experiencing it.

Grasp it that we might walk in it. Not just a mental concept, but the word know. To live in it.

To experience it. Full knowledge. Not just concepts held, but reality lived.

That you might know these things. Day by day God wants us to know these things. Understand them, grow in them, walk in them.

Let's concentrate on the third one. God wants us to know, verse 19, what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. Too much of the time too many of us are drawing upon the sufficiency of man to try and live the Christian life.

Human power to make each day work as Christians. That's not what God wants us to know. We knew that in Adam.

How to bear down, get tough, bite the bullet, reach deep inside. You can say it a thousand ways. It's all humanism.

It's man drawing on the resources of man and scraping in there to find a little more. This isn't what God wants us to know. The whole world knows about that.

They're trying to develop that. They've got their seminars on that. You know, get in touch with the inner child within you.

That's humanism. That's human resource. Then somebody like Tony Robbins comes along, stir the giant that is within you.

Oh, it's a giant now. Oh, wow. Oh, it's just a little child.

Now it's a giant, you know. But it's all human resource inside that man just, you know, possesses and he just taps into it. The whole dead Adamic world.

Everyone born on the face of the earth in the history of man. He's been trying to build a life out of that from the beginning. That's not what God wants us to know.

He wants us to know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, working on our lives. What is that power? According to the working of His mighty power, verse 20, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. The power God wants you and I to know about, increasingly understand and walk in day by day, is this great power that works toward us.

It's available to work on our lives and then in and through. What is that power? It's His power. His power described in what way? The working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

It's resurrection power. Have you thought of this lately? Depending how long you've been in the Lord, have you thought of this ever? That the power you and I are to draw upon for daily Christian living is resurrection power? The natural thing when you get up in the morning is to think, boy, this human power is sure limited. Especially at my age, I mean, you come out of the bed groaning, you know.

Oh, another miracle day. Stand upright. Walk, function.

Especially the pace the Lord's given us, and you better be ready to do it for like 14 hours. I don't know. Sounds like an eternity to me.

Well, that's not the power we're to draw on. That power works in and through all of those aspects of humanity, but becomes the very energizing dynamic in and through all of it for a Christian, for a new covenant servant, for one living by the grace of God. Not depending on man's sufficiency, but putting their hope in God's sufficiency.

That sufficiency flows forth in this form. Resurrected life. Resurrection power.

This is a great prayer to be praying for one another, for our own walk with the Lord. That we would know, the eyes of our understanding enlightened, that we would know the power of His resurrection that is working toward us. The resource of an energizing, dynamic power that is available to you and me is beyond comprehension.

And it's so easy to forget it. We get so aware of our own resources. I mean, most of us, I lived 25 years, almost 26, only drawing on my own resource.

That was the only one there. So I had some knowledge and learning and understanding of that. Then you come to Christ and it takes a while to learn.

That resource isn't sufficient. Not acceptable. Then you come to Christ and it takes a while to learn.

That resource isn't sufficient. Not acceptable. Calling is too holy, the task too high.

It's be like Christ. Not be better than you were yesterday. Most of us, once born again, like that got better than we were yesterday, even in our thinking and our acting, you know.

We're just all of a sudden like, oh man, I don't want to live like that anymore. But it's not just be better than before. Praise God.

He changes our habits, our words, our thinking. But it's grow more in Christlikeness. That's the standard.

That calls for a glorious sufficiency from God alone. It takes a power. How much power do you have to find inside and exert upon yourself to be like Jesus Christ? Well, let's face it, we don't have the power.

In human power, how much human power do you have to draw in to be like Christ? Well, how many people does it take standing together, saying in unison, to the storm that blows, peace, be still. You can't summon enough human power. One word from Jesus and it's a done deal.

It's a whole different realm. It's a whole different realm. How hard do you have to try to walk in Jesus shoes when he said, I always do those things that please the heavenly Father.

You can't try hard enough to be perfect. You don't have the power to affect the changes needed. But the sufficiency of God includes resurrection power.

Oh, that's what does the job. Resurrected living by God's sufficiency. God wants us to know this power.

There is a direct relationship between the resurrection and sanctification. The resurrection is the kind of power we need for the godly life we're called to grow in. Here's another connection described in Philippians, next book along.

Philippians 3, verse 10. Paul said that I may know him. This was the great desire of the apostle Paul, that I may know him, that I may know the Lord.

Knowing God is the heart of it all. It's life itself. We find eternal life when we meet him in Jesus Christ.

We grow in that life as we get acquainted with him. Our faith is built. Our trust and hope is focused and enlarged as we get to know the Lord.

Paul said that I may know him. And the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to death. Now at first glance it looks like four things there.

That I may know him, the power of the resurrection, fellowship of his sufferings, conformity to death. Not really so. One stands out like a mighty mountain above the others.

Which one? Knowing him. The little word and has the implication often in the New Testament, can even be translated with the word even or that is. That I may know him, that is, or even in this way.

The power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to his death. Actually what's listed here is one great reality above all realities. In fact, Paul called knowing the Lord the number one issue in life.

Look at verse 8. Yet indeed I also count all things lost for the excellence of the value, the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. That word excellence could be translated the surpassing value. In fact some versions translate it exactly that way.

Paul said everything I had or could come up with on my own or from the world, I just count it lost. It's a zero. It's in the way.

I trade it all off. I lay it all aside. I deny it all for the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

The great issue of life, the reason we're here on earth, is to have the opportunity to know the Lord. And once knowing him here, grow in that here, get enlarged in that capacity here, then enter in forever into an eternal weight of that glory, an eternal fullness of that glory, a capacity to get acquainted with him in great dimensions throughout eternity. And Paul said that I may know him.

Well how do we get to know the Lord? Well certainly it's the revelation of himself through the word by his spirit, but in depth and reality it's all of that revealed and then applied in the path we walk along. So that what God shows us in the word becomes what we walk in. Oh then we're really getting to know him, not just facts about him, but all of this in the word becomes this kind of life with this one.

We're getting to know him in the word. And here are three arenas where the word gets applied out into our lives. Three arenas in which we get to know the Lord.

If you were offered here three ways, three arenas to get to know the Lord better, resurrection, suffering, or death, which one would you choose? Duh. I think it would be kind of unanimous, right? Give us that resurrection knowledge of God. Well praise the Lord, that's where it starts.

Do you know our first real knowing of the Lord, meeting him, meeting the Lord born again, is an act of the resurrection power of God. We are raised from the dead. We were dead in trespasses and sins and through faith in Jesus we're raised with the Lord Jesus.

Ephesians 2 describes that beautifully. And oh it's glorious isn't it? Remember those resurrection days? It was like a heavenly honeymoon. Oh man! Everything had a light step in it and a song.

It was just glorious. You have a burst of joy, this ton of sins, or maybe ten tons of sins, rolled off your shoulders from death to life, forgiven, loved by God, meeting the Lord Jesus Christ, eternity now ours with him. Wow! You talk about a hallelujah celebration.

It was us getting to know the Lord in the power of his resurrection. There was a family next door to us and my wife and I in the sixties and seventies lived in Dallas and I was pastoring there. There was a dear family next door, came out of the Catholic tradition.

The Lord began to build a relationship and came to love each other very much and one by one the Lord just started bringing them into the family of God, born again through faith in Jesus Christ. Not religion but relationship. And some of them were pretty serious about their religion.

But it turned out, and this is not true of everyone in every church or group, but this family did not know the Lord Jesus. They knew religion, they knew the rituals, they knew the routine. Oh, they were serious about it.

But they began to meet the Lord Jesus and just come alive. And then the mother who sort of became the spiritual leader and eventually, praise God, the father put his faith in the Lord, but she kept bringing the relatives over to our house. And often she'd sow so many seeds it was like catching fruit falling off a tree.

She'd witness and testify and pray and read the Bible to them and then she'd bring them over to our house. We'd sit down and read two verses and they'd just repent and believe. It was great spiritual fun.

I remember one day one of the relatives came over and I mean in five minutes, in the Word of God, she was weeping in repentance before God. We prayed, she put her faith in the Lord Jesus and she went from broken hearted tears and contrition to this bubbling fountain of joy. She couldn't stop smiling, she couldn't stop grinning.

What had happened? She was getting to know the Lord in the power of His resurrection. And that power just bubbled out in joy and delight. Praise God, that's the way we all get to know the Lord at first, the power of His resurrection.

But there are other ways to get to know the Lord. And sometimes when some Christians are just about to get to know Him in some new dimensions, they think that all the wheels have come off their Christian cart. Why? Because they start to suffer.

Suffer? Nobody told me I was going to suffer. I thought it was just going to be a hallelujah celebration every day all the way. You mean that there could be a difficulty or two in the Christian life? One or two thousand a month? Shame on us for not letting the newborns and the family know that it's not just joy and excitement.

Oh, there's plenty of that. But there's also other aspects. God wants us to know Him in the power of His resurrection, and He's so kind to start out there.

I kind of wish He'd just stay right there, you know. Every day, nothing but the power of His resurrection. Well, there are other things to get to know about the Lord, like a fellowship in His sufferings.

And those who follow the Lord and walk in that resurrected life and power, affliction and trouble and trial start coming. Persecution, opposition. Some people who liked you a lot don't even like you a little anymore.

Things that seem so simple, all of a sudden there's a new dimension, and for a while we can't figure out what it is. Then we find out, oh, it's warfare. I thought it was going to always be a church picnic, and it's a

battle zone.

It's the fellowship of His sufferings. The world, the devil, they're against the Lord and His people. Jesus suffered much.

He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His brethren. No one knew the joy of the Father and life as it was designed, like Jesus, but He was also a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He went through heartache and heartbreak and sweat drops of blood in the garden.

That was for our sin. But He suffered opposition and persecution. That was because of His righteousness.

And when we grow in rightness, righteousness, godliness, as we become more like Christ, those forces and people who didn't appreciate Him when He was here will have the same attitude toward us. Jesus said, if they persecuted Me, here's a clue, they're going to persecute you. Then He put it kind of humorously, if they kept My Word, they'll keep yours.

They didn't keep His. They often won't appreciate ours. But that is getting to know the Lord in the fellowship of His suffering.

And that's important. It lets us grow in our loving appreciation and understanding of our Lord and what life in the Lord is about. There's also suffering because we're in a sin-fallen, sin-scarred, sin-sick world.

Jesus walked through this world and it brought suffering. We walk through to any measure like He did and we fellowship in this same suffering. We take part in it.

We have a share in the same kind of suffering. And our appreciation for the Lord grows. Oh, wow.

He left glory above to go through stuff like this, that He might get to that cross on my behalf. Wow, Lord, thanks. Wow.

I appreciate You all the more. Oh, and I see life in you has a dimension I didn't anticipate at the start. What's happening? We're getting to know the Lord in the fellowship of His suffering.

There's another arena where we get to know the Lord, probably our least favorite of all, being conformed to His death. Being conformed to His death, where everything around us and sometimes within us looks and feels like it's dying, despair, heartache, impossibility, buried. Say to someone, how are you doing? I'm buried.

And sometimes they mean it. They don't just mean under the pile of a lot of things to get done. They mean buried.

Maybe you've been there. I've been walking with the Lord since the last week of 1965 and I've had a taste of the conformity to His death a few major times, what I would call in this language here, entombments, where for all practical purposes, mind, emotion, will, circumstance, own sense of inadequacy and even perplexity and that you might as well be Lazarus lying there in the grave. If you've walked along with the Lord, you may have been there.

A conformity to His death, put in a place like He was, where if the Father wasn't faithful, it was totally all over because into the Father's hand, He committed His spirit. And He ended up in a tomb. And often to fulfill the Father's will and glorify the Father in His will and not ours be done, we get in those spots.

It's as though we're dead. Kind of a spiritual anguishing paralysis almost. I can remember the first time that happened.

It's happened like three times in 30-some years with the Lord. And I don't mind saying unashamedly that I don't care if it never happens again. I'm not looking for another one, I'll tell you.

But oh, God's marked my heart with those three. The toughest one was the first one because I not only thought it was over, I thought it was over forever. You know, swept up in despair and doubt and fear.

No fruit on the vine, as Habakkuk put it. No cattle in the stall. No sheep in the fold.

That's tough when you're a pastor. I didn't know what was going on. I just thought I was bottoming out.

Hey, I guess you just don't have what it takes, Bob. I didn't realize I was getting to know the Lord in a conformity to His death, the helplessness that only He could reverse. I remember the day it changed.

You might say, well, how'd you get out of that? The same way Lazarus got out. Remember his seven steps to get out of the tomb program? How'd he get out? Jesus called him out. I remember the day the Lord called me out of that first tomb I'd been in.

I'd been serving the Lord about ten years, eleven years as a pastor. Never imagined such a thing could happen. Hopelessness and despair and doubt and impossibility.

But it changed in a day when the Lord sent a young man to my office and I was just languishing and dying. Doors closed and heart dead. And I thought, Lord, well, it was great serving you, but I guess I can't cut it, I guess.

It's buried me, Lord. This young guy came to my office and said, Bob, I've been going to this kind of liberal church. We want to start a home Bible study.

We asked the pastor if we could, and he said, yes, and we think the Lord's going to let us reach a lot of people right there in this church organization. And he said, we could ask you if you'd teach the home Bible study. And I started crying.

He gave me a look like, well, you don't have to teach it if you don't want to. He didn't know what was going on. What was going on was I was hearing Bob come forth.

I'm not through with you. I was just taking you through the tomb. Giving you a little conformity to my death.

Letting you get in that impossibility, helplessness where it all depends on the faithfulness of the Father. Jesus was there, but the Father was faithful. And He was faithful to me.

Here I am still serving the Lord, twenty-some years later. Oh, I tell you, that getting to know the Lord that way, it does something to your faith. The first time you think it's erasing it.

When God's through, it builds in another aspect. One of the favorite threats of the enemy is, man, I'll bury you if you don't back off. That's pretty intimidating.

The enemy has ways to intimidate us. When you're buried and raised, it's like, well, that wouldn't be the end. I mean, if the enemy could kill us, it's like, wow, boy.

Bummer. You mean straight to heaven, huh? Wow, boy. How long should I shudder? You know what I mean? It's like he can't get us that way anymore.

And a conformity to His death has that impact on you. I'll tell you, I've come to the end of my faithfulness. And I mean, it was agonizing there.

I've come to the end of my own pumped up ability to do and believe. And I'll tell you, it's like dying. When He raises you, you've got a whole new view on the whole thing.

Hey, I'm alive how? By that resurrection faithfulness of God. I can live this day how? With a living hope through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The resurrection is absolutely tied into sanctification.

That is the daily Christian life. Paul wanted to know the Lord in all these ways. Verse 11, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

This is not resurrection at the end, the final resurrection. He already had that by being in Christ. This is something he wanted to appropriate now.

Step into now. Know the Lord this way now. This verse could be paraphrased.

In fact, I think the Amplified Bible does something like this. Paul says, I want to know the Lord so greatly, resurrection, suffering, a conformity to death, all these means in every way applied, if by any means I might walk in a resurrected kind of living now among this dead world. In fact, the word resurrection here is a unique form of it.

It's only used once in the whole New Testament. The out resurrection, the lifting up out of. He wanted to be lifted by His walk with God up above a dead world.

He wanted to walk a resurrection life now based on what? Knowing God. The amazing thing is, when you get to know the Lord through the conformity to His death, you know where it always leads to? Back to the resurrection. The ultimate application of the power and grace and work of God in any dying situation is when He raises us again.

He raised me out of those three tombs. I tell you, they give you a resurrection kind of faith. A faith that realizes God can work and do even beyond the extremities of man's limits.

It's called resurrection power. And then we get to know the Lord and the power of His resurrection again. You know, you're back on resurrection ground.

Well, I tell you, teaching that Bible study after I thought it was all over, a year of dying, teaching that Bible study was like, glory, hallelujah, I'm raised from the dead! And I'm there teaching and I'm watching other people get raised from the dead in new birth and in deadness of Christian life. Raised by resurrection power. The more I walked in that, the more my heart said, Lord, I want to walk in that increasingly the rest of my days.

Resurrected living by God's sufficiency. One more description of that. 2 Corinthians 1, 8-10.

Did the Apostle Paul really go through agonizing things like that? Oh yeah, look at 2 Corinthians 1, 8-10. Paul writing, for we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had

descendants of death in ourselves.

What was happening to Paul? He was being experientially entombed. He was being led into a conformity to death, like Jesus. Put in a place where only the faithfulness of God and resurrection power from God can change it.

Look at the terms. Burdened beyond measure, above strength, despaired of life, carried about inside themselves a sentence of death. Yeah, great leaders of God even have gone through things like that.

Well, Jesus sure did, and even Paul, of course, as he followed the Lord. But notice, we had the sentence of death. We died in all these ways that, in order that, for the purpose of, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.

You know, it's one thing to say, I believe in a God of resurrection. I'm anticipating being raised at the last day, if the Lord comes after my physical death. It's one thing to say that, and that's a great confession.

It's another thing experientially now, in flesh and blood walk now, to be brought to a practical deadness like Paul was, and find out it's that we should not trust in ourselves, but in a God who raises the dead. Do you know what it often takes to have our faith grow in the Lord? And that is God to work in a way that destroys our faith in ourselves. You know why many of us don't trust wholly in the Lord? Because we're still trusting in ourselves in ways we don't even want to face or admit.

Paul was taken through agonies here, to what end? That he and his missionary team would not trust in themselves, but in God who raises the dead. One way God purges us of self-trust is he takes us to the end of self's resources. But then we cry out, God help, Lord God come to my rescue.

He comes through in that deadening situation, and you know what we say? I believe in a God who raises the dead. What are you talking about? The end? No, I'm talking about now. I'm talking about yesterday.

I'm talking about last night. He raised me from deadness. I know a God who raises the dead in every way that it needs to be done.

See, this is the resurrection tied in to the Christian life. The Christian life is a resurrection life. It is found only in a resurrected Lord.

And it can only be developed following, getting acquainted with, trusting and believing that resurrected Lord. We're called to resurrected living by God's sufficiency. In conclusion, just a couple of verses just to read and pray about and reflect on that way.

Conclusion to this study, conclusion to our entire series, 2 Corinthians 3, 5 and 6. Let's conclude with the ones we started on. Oh, how this kind of resurrected living by God's sufficiency fits this theme verse. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as servants of the new covenant.

Not of the letter, but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Oh, that fits perfectly, living by resurrection sufficiency. 2 Corinthians 4, 7, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

What power? Resurrected power, the resurrected life of Christ. Verse 10, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body. Verse 11, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

In our earthen vessels what is to be seen is the resurrected life of Christ. Resurrected living by God's sufficiency. Remember classic Galatians 2.20, I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live.

Not a natural human life, not man's sufficiency, but Christ lives in me. Resurrection life, God's sufficiency through the resurrected life of Christ. And the life which I now live in the flesh, the life we now live in this flesh and bones body, we live by faith in the Son of God.

Resurrected living by faith in Jesus Christ. Colossians chapter 3, verse 4, a great little phrase, oh meditate on this one, when Christ who is our life appears. Yes, Christians are given life from God, eternal life, but the life He gives us is His own life to share, like a vine shares its life with a branch.

What is that life? Resurrected life. Christ is our life, it is a resurrected life He shares. How much sufficiency does that bring our way? Our last verse, Colossians 3.11, talks about the new creation, the body of Christ, where Christ is all and in all.

Jesus Christ lives in all of His people, He wants to be all in all, that all of them will ever need. He's our all in all. He's in all of us and He's all we'll ever need.

Is that sufficiency? Those are words of sufficiency. And since it's Christ who is that sufficiency, it's resurrection life. Our Lord is a risen Lord who lives in us.

Our comprehensive sufficiency is found in the resurrected life of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we trust in Him, depend on Him, it doesn't matter if we're in a trial or an opportunity. It doesn't matter if we're called to step out and take action or endure in a waiting process.

It doesn't matter how diverse the situations are. Our sufficiency is the same, drawing by faith upon the resurrected life of the resurrected Lord Jesus who lives in us right now. By His Spirit, He wants that life lived in us and out through us.

Yes, in God's sufficiency for godly living, there is included this glorious reality, resurrected living by the sufficiency of God.

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