

Resurrection 4

The Power the Resurrection Gives Us

Ephesians 1:18-21

We've spent three weeks looking at the subject of Resurrection. What happens when we die; the only two options of our life, what's so important about the resurrection. Everything we've looked at has been kind of a "big picture" study – looking at eternity and God's Plan for the Ages and seeing that resurrection is a reality – it WILL happen.

Today I want to bring the subject down to a more personal level. I mean, yes, we will die one day. Yes, we will be resurrected and judged and spend eternity either in heaven or hell.

Our final destination is determined by the choice we make in this life. If we refuse to trust in Christ alone as the only way of salvation, we spend eternity in hell. If we admit we're sinners and trust in Christ and His death on the cross for our sins, we spend eternity in heaven.

But what about now? This week? Life right now? How does the resurrection affect how I live? My family life? How I raise my kids? My job? How I handle my finances? My anger? Depression? Schedule? You know, all those things I deal with now? What does Jesus' resurrection mean in my life? (Hope>Power)

Let's start in Ephesians 1:18. Paul is writing to the church in the city of Ephesus. He's writing to them from prison. Paul was in prison when he wrote Ephesians. Yet he wasn't thinking about himself. He seldom thought of himself. Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians were all written in prison. Even though his freedom was limited, one thing Paul COULD do was pray for others. And he did that a lot.

For the believers in Ephesus, Paul's prayer wasn't a prayer for anything physical, or for anything material. He was praying for something within – something unseen – something spiritual.

Because, the fact is what we really need isn't physical power. We need INNER strength– we need stronger faith, stronger self-discipline, greater love, more mercy. We need more and more of the qualities we see in Jesus Christ.

We need inner strength to face the challenges of daily life. More patience with our kids, more unconditional love in our marriage, more wisdom and courage at our job.

And guess what? God has given us that power. The same power that brought Jesus from the dead NOW works in us. Listen to what Paul says.

We're going to interrupt the paragraph where Paul is telling them how he's praying for them, 1:18:

Ephesians 1:18 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,

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Did you see it? He says that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to us as we face the day-to-day challenges of life. Let's read it again.

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

When we think of power, we usually think of something big, explosive, earth-shaking. We think of hurricanes, volcanoes, tsunamis. But the resurrection power of God isn't like that at all. It's quiet, almost unnoticeable. You don't have any sense that it's happening, but it IS happening.

Look at the resurrection of Jesus. We tend to look at the violent earthquake that took place (Matthew 28:2), the rolling away of that huge stone and the frightened screams of the Roman guards.

But all those events FOLLOWED the resurrection. They were results of the resurrection. Jesus was already resurrected when those things took place.

Before those events, the power of the resurrection was there inside the tomb, in total quietness. The stone wasn't rolled away to let Jesus out. It was rolled away to let people IN.

The very same power that brought Jesus back to life—the same power that conquered death – that same power that will resurrect OUR bodies one day is available to us, believers in Jesus Christ, right now! Take a closer look at that power.

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Even though it's a quiet power, it's definitely not weak.

The word *exceeding* comes from the Greek word "hyperbollun." It means super, beyond normal.

The word *greatness* comes from the Greek word "mega." It means HUGE, enormous.

The word *power* comes from the Greek word "dunamis." It means explosive.

The super mega dynamite power of God is in us NOW. And here's what that means to you in your life right now.

1. You have the super mega dynamite power to change.

That power can take a sinner like you or me and wash away our sins and change us into a new person. Listen to what 2 Corinthians 5:17 says.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

We first experience the super mega dynamite power of the resurrection when we trust Christ. We may not feel it, or recognize it – remember, it works quietly. But in that moment of faith, when we trust in Christ, God re-creates us. All of our old is gone and ALL things – everything about us – becomes new.

Let me explain it like this. We're all familiar with identity theft. You know, someone gets your credit card number and then they pretend to be you and spend your money. They run up your debt and they can literally destroy your life, your identity – who you really are.

Well, that's what sin has done to each of us. It started in the Garden of Eden with our very first parents. They'd been created to serve God and love God and obey God. Their lives were totally God-centered.

But they believed the devil's lie and disobeyed God. And suddenly not only were they spiritually dead, separated from God. Sin stole their original identity and their hearts turned inward away from God and onto themselves.

And that same spiritual "gene" has been passed down to every single one of us, the descendants of Adam and Eve. We're born spiritually dead. We're also born VERY self-centered.

Why, we can see our self-centered nature even in little babies. Yes, sometimes they cry because they're hungry or because their diaper is wet. But, they learn very quickly to cry just because they want something and they're not getting it.

You see, the nature of sin makes life all about US. Everything in life is all about US. But God created us to have an identity in HIM. It's in GOD we find purpose and fulfillment and happiness in life. But sin stole that identity from us. Now we try to find fulfillment and purpose and happiness in everything but God, because we're desperately trying to satisfy ourselves.

When we admit our sin to God and believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for us and invite Him into our hearts—He actually comes in! Jesus Christ, God Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit, comes into our life, our heart, our being. And when He does, He uses the super mega dynamite power of His resurrection to destroy all the old selfishness and make us into new people.

The super mega dynamite power of Jesus' resurrection changes people. It makes us new—BETTER. Do you want to be a BETTER husband or wife or parent or employee? Jesus' resurrection power can make you one!

God's super mega dynamite resurrection power changed a persecutor named Saul into a missionary named Paul. It turned a bunch of scared disciples who deserted Christ and hid into bold, passionate preachers who ultimately gave their lives for Him. It has changed millions and millions of people all over the world for centuries – and it can change me and you.

Stop and think. What is it in your life that you want to change? Habit? Attitude? Weakness? You know it's there. You know it shouldn't be there. Understand, you have been given the power – God's super mega dynamite power – to make that change. Just quit loving it more than God. Stop deceiving yourself. Quit believing the lie that you can't change.

Understand, YOU can't change you, but GOD can. So humble yourself and believe Him and obey Him. God will have to change your behavior; He will have to change your appetites; He will have to change your desires. But if you don't let God change those areas of your life, you will stay the same, just as you are.

The same super mega dynamite power that brought Jesus back to life is available to YOU right now! But you must believe it! Verse 19 says:

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

God's super mega dynamite power is already in you. Believe it! You see, this power works by faith! It's not BOOM then I believe. It's I believe then BOOM!

We see examples of this all through the Bible. Do you remember when Joshua led the people of Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land? The people of Israel were lined up, and the priests were told to go first, carrying the Ark of the Covenant.

They walked to the edge of River Jordan, which was flowing at flood stage. God didn't tell them to wait till the water stopped and then cross. He said start walking and the water will stop. And that's what they did.

Can you imagine? At the edge of a roaring river, and they believed that God would do what he said He would do. They took that first step into the flood and when their feet touched the water, the water parted, and they walked on dry ground to the other side. It wasn't even muddy! It was dry!

You see, the super mega dynamite power is already there, and God is waiting for you to believe. So trust God and start changing. Don't wait on God to change you. YOU start changing and watch God work. That's how you unleash His power.

But that's not all the super mega dynamite resurrection power means in your life.

2. You now have the super mega dynamite power to love.

As a believer, Jesus now lives inside you in the person of the Holy Spirit. And because Jesus loves all people unconditionally, now YOU can, too. Think about what that means in your parenting and in your marriage and in your relationships at work.

Listen to what Romans 5:5 says about the love that's inside of us.

Romans 5:5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

When we trusted in Christ, not only did we receive the gift of eternal life, we also received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christ Himself living in us. And when we received that wonderful gift, His love was poured into our hearts.

As a believer, you CAN love like Jesus loves. That means you don't just love people who are easy to love or people who are natural for you to love. Jesus' standard was radical love. He loved His enemies; He loved people who did really awful things.

He loved the kind of people that the human part of you would rather reject or retaliate against. Jesus' love caused Him to pray as He hung nailed to a cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Is that what YOU would've said? How you would've felt. How easy is it for us to turn the other cheek? Do good to those who use you and take advantage of you? Pray for those who ridicule you?

Do you love unconditionally? Or do you love only those who meet your standards? People you like? People like you?

The fact is, on our own, we have a very limited capacity to love. But Jesus' resurrection super mega dynamite power gives us power to express the GREATEST love, the same kind of love Jesus expressed for everyone as He hung on the cross.

Even while we were still sinners, rebellious against God, enemies of God, Christ died for us. That's love! Because of the power in you, you can change, you can love. One more benefit of God's super mega dynamite resurrection power.

3. You can now overcome your biggest fear.

Each of us has our own sources of fear, don't we? Heights, water, dark, spiders. But for many of us our greatest source of anxiety is the one thing we're powerless to stop: death.

Did you know that 1 out of 1000 people smell sounds? 1 out of 100 people dream in color. 1 out of 10 people are left-handed. 1 out of 1 people die. And as you get older you realize that statistic includes you—and that's a scary thought.

As we know, 1 Corinthians 15 is the chapter that deals with the subject of resurrection – how important it is, what it means, who’s involved, what it’s like, when it will happen. As Paul reaches the end of the chapter, it’s as if he lays down his pen and reflects on all the Holy Spirit has just led him to write. And he says:

1 Corinthians 15:55 "O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?"

It’s as if Paul suddenly sees death in the right perspective. So he looks death in the eye and says, “You’re not as scary as everyone thinks. Why be afraid of you!”

You see, the resurrection of Jesus Christ proved that death doesn’t have the last word. It doesn’t have the final say. The power of death has been broken by the super mega dynamite resurrection power of God. And Christ has given us that same victory.

15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen. Do you want this super mega dynamite power I’ve been talking about?

- power to become the person you’ve always wanted to be?
- power to be free from the poisonous thoughts of vengeance because now you love even your enemies?
- power to be finally free from the fear of death?

Do you want this super mega dynamite power? It’s yours if you will just believe.

It’s all yours NOW if you will bow your heart before God and believe that what Jesus did on the cross He did for you. Jesus paid the price for you and rose from the grave so you could have forgiveness and a guaranteed home in heaven.

Not because of who you are or what you’ve done, but because of Jesus and what He did for you.

Jesus has done it all. Now what will you do? Let’s pray.