[Take away: Resurrection life provides power over sin and death]

Introduction

intro self

in this series we have talked about the power of Jesus’ resurrection - what it really means to be alive, and how that brings in the dawn of a new day.

New Beginning / New Hope / New Peace / New Power

Today’s Scripture passage

Romans 6:4-11 (The Message paraphrase)

Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father so that we can see where we’re going in our new grace-sovereign country. Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer captive to sin’s demands!

What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ’s sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. We know that when Jesus was raised from the dead it was a signal of the end of death-as-the-end. Never again will death have the last word.

When Jesus died, he took sin down with him, but alive he brings God down to us. From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That’s what Jesus did.

SLIDE 2 What is the new power of Resurrection Life?

Resurrection life gives to us the power over the two biggest enemies humanity faces.

Sin produces the evil which destroys our capacity for life and death robs us of the possibility of life.

The resurrection life that Paul is writing about in this passage in Romans is the power Jesus provides us over sin and death.

Before I became a Christian sin produced inside of me an evil which separated me from joy and hope

My own sinful decisions created for me a scenario which C.S. Lewis describes as “An ever-increasing craving for an ever-diminishing pleasure” (Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis 1942)

No matter what self-centered sinful activity I tried to bring me joy and hope, it always failed.

Sin never ever lived up to the promise it made me… the promise that the next sin would be the one which provided joy and hope… the next time would fill the void.

And I fell for the lie over and over and over again.

I also feared eternity - i feared immortality

Unending boredom that transformed into despair

I did not want their to be a God because the thought of existing forever terrified me

SLIDE 3 Resurrection Life provides power over sin

What is sin?

Biblical data concerning the nature of sin

Genesis 2:15-17 (HCSB) in the Old Testament. The story of the Fall of man into sin.

“The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”

Here we see God giving a command and because man does not follow the command he falls into sin.

Romans 5:18-19 (HCSB) in the New Testament. Paul, writing about Adam’s sin, says, “So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is life-giving justification for everyone.

For just as through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.”

Paul writes about Adam’s sin in terms of trespass and in terms of disobedience to God.

Finally, the third passage is from 1 John 3:4 (HCSB).

“Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law.”

Theologians talk of how the Bible tells us that sin is mainly three things.

The first is pride.

In Genesis we see man wants to put himself in the place of God. He wants to be like God, sin is pride – putting myself in a place I should not have.

We see examples of this celebrated in culture all around us every day - in our music, entertainments, and philosophy

When people triumphantly declare “I did it my way” they are applauded by culture

When people declare that they are the sovereign ruler over their own lives, our culture celebrates them.

In fact culture demands they be celebrated for this act of placing themselves on the throne

And just as in the Hans Christian Anderson story, The Emperor Has No Clothes, everyone desperately cheers and agrees to the sin of pride in others because their own pride doesn’t want to be embarrassed that they can’t see the non-existent clothes either.

The second thing the Bible calls sin is inappropriate desire - theologians call this concupiscence - a grasping, a coveting, a kind of craving that sin produces.

The inappropriate desire of choosing my will instead of God’s will. Concupiscence, a lusting – not just sexual lust, but craving or coveting in a way that again places myself in God’s role.

Again, every where we turn we can see the evidence of this produced in our world.

The craving for the newest fashion symbol that will make us feel more elite than others.

The desire for more social media fame than others.

The jealousy of others who we perceive to be more beautiful or more talented than us.

The coveting of the the relationships other people share.

Finally, the third thing the Bible tells us is sin is unbelief.

Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, writes that unbelief, peccatum radicale, is the main characteristic of sin (“The Freedom of a Christian.” 1520)

Because from unbelief flows all the other aspects of sin.

Unbelief in God is the foundation of all the other evils that are produced.

The serpent in the Garden of Eden “… did God really say?”

This means unbelief is not small or insignificant, but is in fact the chief principal sin.

Pride, inappropriate desire, and unbelief - these things are the main characteristics of sin.

This means that sin is not passive, it is a willful choice to rebel.

It’s not a weakness of humanity, it is our assault on the person and authority of God.

We choose pride, we choose to give into inappropriate desire, we choose to engage in unbelief.

Therefore, humanity in its sin finds itself under proper condemnation by a righteous and holy God, deserving of punishment and righteous wrath.

We innately understand righteous wrath and we desire for the working out of just punishment.

In our lives we see injustices and we get angry, we know people who are conducting these injustices deserve to be punished.

Our pop culture, literature, music, and stories are full of wrongs being made right.

We hunger for revenge and thirst for pay back because our sense of balance is assaulted by the unfairness of evil.

We cry out “that evil person must be punished!”

And God says, rest assured child they will be. Because they deserve to be.

But what we don’t allow ourselves to see, what we shield our eyes from seeing, is that we ourselves are guilty of the same kind of injustices against God.

Jesus says in the Bible that whatever we do in our heart we have done in effect.

So we are adulterers, we are murderers, we are the evil people of the world.

And God says, rest assured child, you will be justly punished for your sin. Because you deserve to be.

This understanding helps us see that Martin Luther’s statement about unbelief as a fundamental sin is so true.

We stand condemned already, and if we refuse Jesus’ offer to rescue us then we condemn our selves.

As a spoiled child hurl’s their dinner on the floor, we throw away the greatest possible gift of all.

SLIDE 4 Resurrection Life provides power over death

What is death?

The termination of life.

Death is the permanent, irreversible cessation of all biological functions that sustain a living organism. Death is an inevitable, universal process that eventually occurs in all living organisms. (Wikipedia)

The Bible also recognizes that death has an even more terrible and horrifying aspect to it.

Scripture tells us that death brings an eternal separation from God

Why do we fear it

We know that death is the end of all we have

Death is the universal enemy of humanity

Our culture at times has tried to convince us that death is natural, that death is something to be embraced as part of the great circle of life

but every human, from youngest to oldest is fully aware that again, the emperor is wearing no clothes

We all know that death is an enemy that robs us, steals from us, cheats us because by dying we lose everything, even our own selves

Death is an insult, death is an embarrassment

And as we saw in the Bible passage from Genesis earlier, death is not what God wants for us; it is a result of humanity’s own sinful choices.

Jesus himself despised death - we see this when his friend Lazarus died

John 11: 21-27; 32-33; 35; 38; 41-44 (HCSB)

Then Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. Yet even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You.”

“Your brother will rise again,” Jesus told her. Martha said, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live.

Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die—ever. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told Him, “I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world…”

When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet and told Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died!” When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, He was angry[b] in His spirit and deeply moved…

Jesus wept…

Then Jesus, angry[c] in Himself again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. “Remove the stone,” Jesus said…

So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You heard Me. I know that You always hear Me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so they may believe You sent Me.”

After He said this, He shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him and let him go.”

What does immortality mean?

To continue consciously forever

Something we have sought after since the beginning of humanity

However, without God, immortality would become a literal Hell eventually. no new relationships, nothing new learned, no new experiences, just an endless repetition that would drive one to madness.

No hope, no way to end it, no way to change.

This is the eternity I feared as a non-believer

SLIDE 5 Resurrection life provides power over sin and death

What does it mean to say Resurrection life provides power over sin and death?

Jesus’ death, his work on the cross, and His resurrection provide us all with the free gift of salvation and sanctification

And as we have studied for the last several weeks, the Bible assures us, that because of his willingness to sacrifice himself for us, that he has shared with us his resurrection life.

We might have friends or family members who don’t believe in God and ask “what kind of God acts like this? If you don’t believe in me, you will be damned to Hell?” Is this a loving God?

But, the Bible doesn’t teach this at all and it’s not what we believe.

Instead of believe-or-be-damned the Bible shows how we are already condemned, we have already rebelled abasing Him from our youngest age, like a petulant child who wants her way.

We are already guilty and deserving of punishment and Jesus says to us not believe or be damned but believe and be saved.

This is why it is important for Christians to have a clear understanding of sin, a clear picture of how humanity, because of our own choices, is already heading to Hell under our own power.

This reality is why Jesus’ act on the cross is an act of rescue, he is truly “saving” us.

This is why we ask, have you been saved?

And the magnificent, the awe-inspiring, the heart-breaking reality of resurrection life is that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, stepped down from Heaven and lived a human life in the middle of this world of injustice.

And he said, yes, their sin is so bad, so evil, so unjust, there must be a fair and impartial reckoning.

Yes, the sin of all these people, the sin of Ronn Stern, deserves to be punished - and God is saying … rest assured, it will be.

And Jesus climbed up onto the cross and volunteered to take all the wrath, all the righteous punishment, all the justice of a Holy God for all our sin, all of my sin.

Rest assured child, the sin will be punished, but not by you, but by the only being who does not deserve to be punished for sin.

The only being who can take the punishment

What does power over sin mean with God?

Power over sin is found in entire sanctification

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:23-23 (HCSB) “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”

an indwelling of the third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit.

An ongoing life-long process where those who follow Jesus become more and more like him through the Holy Spirit’s power.

We believe that sanctification is the work of God which transforms believers into the likeness of Christ. It is wrought by God’s grace through the Holy Spirit in initial sanctification, or regeneration (simultaneous with justification), entire sanctification, and the continued perfecting work of the Holy Spirit culminating in glorification.

In glorification we are fully conformed to the image of the Son.

(Manual Church of the Nazarene)

Resurrection Life gives us power over sin

No longer do we have to live trapped by it, determined by it, despairing because of it

The Holy Spirit living within us provides us the power to turn from sin, to live a holy life

What does immortality mean with God?

Not what I feared as a non-believer

God is the ultimate source of all goodness and all love.

It is important that we wrap our brains around these concepts.

God is a being with infinite goodness, infinite love, and the source of all things.

Resurrection life means sharing eternity with a God who loves us and created us to be with Him, to find our joy in our relationship with Him.

An inexhaustible goodness, inexhaustible love.

A loving God whose qualities and characteristics have an infinite nature means we will not exist forever without change, but will enjoy an ever changing landscape of new experiences, an ever deepening relationship with the source of all goodness and love.

Not an endless repetition but an enteral newness full of hope that never ends.

Application

SLIDE 6 Resurrection life provides power over sin and death

How does this effect me today?

Recognize I am a sinner deserving of punishment and righteous wrath.

Because of Jesus’ sacrificial death for me and his sharing of his resurrection life I can have new life now. I can have new relationships with the people i know now.

Power over sin

How does this effect me in the future?

Power over death

An eternal hope of unending and ever increasing joy and love shared with the being who loves me more than anyone else and desires to be with me forever. so much so, he was willing to die for me.

Conclusion

What do I want us to know?

We can live in victory over sin and death

Belief in Jesus as Messiah, our Christ, is how to get this New Power

What do I want us to do?

Be saved

Be sanctified

SLIDE 7 Prayer - Say Yes to Jesus