

RESURRECTION 2019
RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING!
ROMANS 6:1-14

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Romans chapter 6 as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I think I am safe to say that most if not all of you here this morning, those listening on the radio and the Internet, have seen the changes that have taken place in our nation over the last ten years, and not in a good way.

We have seen morality and common sense give way to in your face immorality and we seem to have lost common sense, common reasoning.

Let me share this article with you, it is from the Washington Times. It is a conservative newspaper that was established to combat the liberal news reporting from the Washington Post.

The article is called, "America's morals on crash course to Rome" and it was written back on June 5, 2018, so a little less than a year ago. And, make no mistake about it, we have not gotten better since that time, it has gotten worse. This is what they wrote,

Americans say the country as it stands today is worse off morally than in past years - and worse off, morally speaking, to a tune that's never before seen.

Can't say this is surprising. It's not rocket science, people. Won't be long before America's Rome, Redux [revived] - you know, the empire that fell due to its moral deprivation?

When the culture becomes one of rot, it's not long until the behaviors and patterns of its people become similarly rotten. These things are circular, where one feeds the other - where the morals feed the culture feed the politics feed the morals feed the culture, and so forth.

The change may come in dribs and drabs, and take generations. But it comes, all the same.

Since the 1960s, for example, statistics guiding out-of-wedlock birthrates have soared from around 24 percent for blacks and 3 percent for whites to 64 percent in 1990 for blacks and 18 percent for whites. Why?

Well, in part, because the stigma of unmarried sex has been removed.

America's gone from a society of wait-'til-you're-married expectations to first-date hookups followed by morning-after pills. Sex is recreational, like dining out and catching a movie, or getting together for racquetball.

And America's entertainment, America's TV shows, both reflect and feed that mindset. Can you imagine, for instance, the mom on the 1950s-era "Leave It To Beaver" handing son Wally a condom as he leaves the house for a night of fun with his friend Eddie? Heck, a modern-day version of that same show wouldn't just have Beaver's mom and dad divorced. . . . Lucy and Ricky's separate on-camera beds? That's today's comedic scene, in and of itself.

Yesterday's "I Love Lucy" sitcom has morphed into today's "Two and a Half Men," where the bedroom of star Charlie Sheen's character is an open and revolving door of one-night partners.

So goes the moral compass of the people, so goes the popular culture - so goes the political system, as well.

Related topics like abortion and homosexuality, once regarded as the stuff of secrets and shame, or at least personal and preserved as topics to discuss with best friends only, have come out of the corner, come out of the closet, and crossed into the line of openly discussed, openly flaunted, openly and even, in some respects, publicly and taxpayer-funded. Culture breeds politics? Ask Planned Parenthood; ask the military's transgenders under Barack Obama.

The good news is that those with sex addictions, unwanted pregnancies, unwelcome homosexual tendencies - those with abusive pasts that fuel negative and harmful and immoral behaviors and habits - can come forward to receive whatever help they want without having to suffer the righteous indignation, mocking or persecution of fools and hypocrites.

The bad news is that cultural ills have now become so understood and tolerated, they've become accepted and normalized. The pendulum has swung wide on that.

Transgender? So's that guy. Pregnant at 16? So's my friend - here's her abortionist's number. Morals? The notion of standard moral behavior? Going, going, gone.

“Americans have always viewed the state of U.S. morals more negatively than positively. But the latest figures are the worst to date, with a record-high 49 percent rating values as poor and a record-tying-low 14 percent rating them as excellent or good,” Gallup reported. “[I]n 10 of the past 12 annual polls since 2007, Americans have been decidedly more likely to rate it as poor. . . . When asked whether U.S. moral values are getting better or worse, Americans have consistently said they are worsening.”

Fully 77 percent now say moral values in the country are getting worse.

- <http://bit.ly/2UyD7oi>

I don't think we are shocked anymore by that, but probably saddened by it all. And the problem for believers, the problem for the church, is that the culture of this nation has crept into the church and now is flooding into the church.

I do realize that there are some out there that see Christianity growing, that revival is breaking out. I am sorry, I don't see that. I pray for it, but I am not seeing it!

Paul said in Titus 2:11-12, **“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”**

You see, the church, believers, are not to be like the world, we are to be like Christ! We are to deny ungodliness, we are to deny worldly lusts, we need to live righteously in the days we are living in!

And yet, look at how secular the church has become. Look at how the church today has adopted the world standards for the right kind of living. And I will give you several things but as you listen, notice the progression because as you move away from something, you will be moving towards something else.

Here is the list,

Teaching that the Bible is not inspired and inerrant.

Using books instead of the Bible in Bible study.

Teaching that there is more than one way to God besides Jesus.

Being embarrassed to say that Jesus is the only way to salvation.

Teaching that there is no absolute right and wrong.

Being careful to not offend anyone at the expense of biblical truth.

Pastors preaching moralism instead of Christ centered messages.

Approving of homosexuality.

Approving of transgenderism.

Approving of women elders.

Not condemning the sins of society.

Psychology as an authority on human nature.

Use of politically correct terms of the world from the pulpit where those terms replace biblical values and truths.

Going to church as a social habit.

Prayer as a last resort.

Missionaries not sent out or supported.

Divorce statistics as common as secular society.

Belief in evolution.

I think you get the idea. You see, once you move away from the Word of God it then has to be replaced with something else. And what comes in is secular humanism, worldly ideas, worldly philosophies and it leads people away from God, even though they may be very religious.

Some of you are aware of the Christian satire site, Babylonian Bee. They are very funny and yet, there is some truth in what they are joking about. Let me show you what I mean. And again, this is a satire site, it is just poking some fun at the church, and yet, when you hear what this is all about, it rings with a lot of truth!

This is what the article has to say,

OAK CREST, NC - At a press conference Monday, representatives for Woodlake Community Church announced plans to merge with the world.

As part of the merger, the church will be absorbed into the world's social and political structures and will adopt the vision, mission, and values of the secular, godless culture.

"We found that we have a lot of the same values in common, so we're going to go ahead and just become one with the godless world," said the church's pastor, Ted Wolfington. "It seems to be mutually beneficial. We get to look cool and hip to everyone around us, and they get to claim some of our moral values as their own. It's a win-win."

The pastor admitted that though the church would gain the world, it would lose its soul.

"But honestly, that seems like a pretty good deal, all things considered."

If approved by the FTC, the merger will go through this summer, just in time for the church's annual "Summer at the Movies" sermon series.

- <http://bit.ly/2O1g9Ur>

Again, funny and yet, very sad because we are seeing this today in the church in America!

And that brings us to what we will be looking at this morning. I have called this message, ***RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING!***

My prayer is that as we go through these verses here in Romans you would see what the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has done in our lives. If there is no change, then you are not living that resurrection life and if you are not living that resurrection life, you are not saved. Or, if you are saved, you are living a very carnal life!

I am not saying you don't go to church, but there is no difference in your life between what you believe and what the unsaved believe, and that should not be!

So with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Romans chapter 6, beginning in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic, ***RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING!***

ROMANS 6

VERSES 1-2

Again, as you read these verses common sense would tell you that what they were thinking is pure foolishness.

Let me paraphrase what the question or the behavior of some of the Christians in Rome was like. Paul is basically saying, ***“Should Christians go on living like fallen creatures because after all if the more we sin the more abundant God's grace is in our lives - let's sin it up so that we will be drenched in God's grace.”***

Again, common sense would tell us that is so wrong! And yet, since we have lost common sense, at least some have, we think that the more we sin the more of God's grace we see! The more we sin or accept sin, the more tolerant we are!

And thus, we have churches that proudly display signs that say that they are a ***“Non-Judgmental Church!”***

What does that mean? It means that we accept any kind of behavior, any kind of sin. We won't judge because that is wrong.

And yet, when you read what Paul is saying here, he is not advocating sinning, not at all!

In regard to sin and sinning and that as we continue to do these things we see God's grace abound, Paul says in regard to this behavior, ***"Of course not!" "Perish the thought!" "God forbid!"*** Or to put it in our vernacular, ***"What are you, nuts?"***

Why is that? Because Paul says we have, **"died to sin"** and it is in the past tense meaning a specific point when that occurred, and it speaks of the day we were saved, it was then that we were dead to sin, or should be!

Keep in mind that we were once dead in sins, (Ephesians 2:1), but now we are dead to sin. In other words, sin no longer has power over us; it is not lord of our life. It doesn't mean that sin is gone, it is not extinct, we just are not slaves to it, under its power!

I think one of the problems today is that we think that the Bible is a ***"Self-Help"*** book and thus, when it comes to sanctification we just need to push on, try harder, work more, it is all about determination.

But it really is not about determination or self-help but transformation and the Lord enabling us to live accordingly. Yes, we must surrender, but we surrender to Him!

Paul put it like this in Romans 12:1-2, **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."**

Transformation not determination! May we remember that.

Resurrection life is a transformed life. Not a perfect life in these bodies of flesh, but we should no longer live for sin! Paul is going to continue that thought as we read on. You see, if we have died with Christ then we should walk in that newness of life that Christ has given to us. That should just make sense. Listen to what Paul says starting in verse 3 of Romans chapter 6.

VERSES 3-4

As I have said so many times before, these are the basics of Christianity. And Paul feels that they should have understood this truth.

But, just in case they missed it, Paul is going to illustrate his point by speaking of baptism.

First of all, the word “**baptized**” or “**baptism**” means “to immerse or overwhelm something.” And when you look at how it is used here, it has to mean immersion.

When Paul speaks of us being baptized in Christ, he is speaking of our salvation. We have immersed our life in His. We are identifying ourselves with Christ!

That is an important aspect as we come to Christ. We are His and thus, we need to walk accordingly. We identify ourselves with Him. Let me explain it like this,

In 1990, center fielder Brett Butler left the San Francisco Giants as a free agent, joining the cross-state rivals, the Los Angeles Dodgers. When Butler returned to San Francisco for the first time as a Los Angeles Dodger, Giants fans greeted him with a mix of boos and cheers.

The cheers turned to boos, however, when Butler hugged Los Angeles manager Tommy Lasorda. “It turned a page in my career,” said Butler. “I’m an L.A. Dodger now; I’m not a Giant. That just kind of solidified it. I wanted them to know, I’m a Dodger.”

When people become Christians, in one way or another they need to identify with Jesus in the sight of all their family, friends, and acquaintances.

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That should just make sense. You see, just as Jesus was buried in the tomb, we are buried in the waters of baptism. It is a picture of death, the death of the old life so that as we come out of the waters of baptism, resurrected you might say, we begin a new life in Christ.

Paul put it this way in II 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.”**

And in Galatians 2:20 Paul tells us, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

And to sum up what baptism is, it is the outward expression identifying you with Christ, it is a picture of what He has done in your life. The reality is Jesus folks, don't substitute the reality with a picture! Baptism doesn't save us, Jesus does. It is not required for salvation, but the Lord has called us to be baptized and thus, every believer should!

And so, Paul's point here is simple. Should we continue in sin so that grace may abound? ***“Certainly not! Of course not!”*** We need to walk in the newness of life that is found in Christ Jesus our Lord!

VERSES 5-10

Look at what Paul is saying here. **“Since we have been united together in the likeness of His death . . .”** And that phrase, **“united together”** is a botanical term and it speaks of growing together, growing together in Christ, that our life is entwined with His!

Why in the world do we want to be more like the world, a world that is war with Christ? That is crazy. Why would we want to grow in its immorality and be less like Christ? It makes no sense!

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 3:27, **“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”**

Think of it like this. When a bride puts on a wedding dress, she is identifying herself as the bride. No one else at the church or at the reception will look like she does. She is special. Her dress is radically different than anyone else’s!

Now, imagine her dress covered in mud, covered in dirt. That would not be appropriate. That would not enhance the dress or make her look more beautiful. She is filthy!

That is how it should be for us as Christians. Not the dirt part, but we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and thus, we should walk accordingly.

The problem many times is we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and then we dirty the garments that Christ has given to us and when the world looks at us, they don’t see anything different.

Let’s face it. In the world we live in today, in the nation we live in today, we are radically different, or we should be!

Remember what Jesus said in John 15:5-7, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”**

Thus, apart from Christ, separated from Him, we are lifeless, we will die spiritually, there will be no fruit born in our lives.

But, in Him we will have abundant life, we will be alive spiritually speaking, and there will be abundant fruit born in our lives. Stay attached to The Vine, Jesus Christ!

Also, keep in mind that God is a superior Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While man is an inferior trinity; body, soul or mind and spirit.

When man was created his spirit was on top controlling his soul or mind with the body on the bottom. But when Adam sinned, when man sinned, his spirit died, and now his soul or mind is controlled by his body appetites, his flesh!

Therefore, when we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior we are ***“born again”*** and our mind is no longer controlled by our bodily appetites or our flesh because it has been crucified and we are now controlled by our spirit.

Of this Jesus said to Nicodemus, “. . . **‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’** Nicodemus said to Him, **‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’** Jesus answered, **‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.’**” John 3:3-8.

Thus, the old man, the old life was placed on the cross with Christ and crucified, and the body of sin is put out of business, it is done away with, we are no longer slaves to it.

The problem comes when we love to build up the flesh today and yet, the Bible tells us that the flesh is good for nothing, there is no good thing that dwells in our flesh! We are to crucify the flesh!

Now that is hard for some to swallow because the world has a hold on them. And they may wonder, *“What are we to do with this flesh nature that we drag along with us?”* I have mentioned it already, but if you don’t believe me, listen to what Paul tells us in Galatians 5:24, **“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”** We are to put that flesh nature to death; and once you do, don’t allow that flesh nature to be resurrected!

Now in Romans 6:6, when Paul speaks of the **“old man”** many believe that is speaking of the *“old nature.”* Therefore, if that were true, when we come to Christ and that old nature was crucified with Christ, it is dead and gone now! We only have that new nature with us.

John MacArthur put it like this, “The old you died, there isn’t any old nature anymore. There isn’t an old nature and a new nature fighting it out in you. Our old man was crucified and buried with Christ and you were raised with a new nature. . . . You’re not a spiritual schizoid.”

I don’t think he is right on this. You see, I don’t think that the “**old man**” and “*old nature*” are the same thing. Again, I don’t think he is right on this.

In Ephesians 4:22 we are told that this term, “**old man**” is, “**that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.**”

First of all, our old nature does not grow corrupt because it is already corrupt!

And if you read through Ephesians 4:22 you can clearly see that Paul is speaking of our old conduct, the things we did and not the “*old nature.*”

My pastor summarized it like this. He wrote,

Let me use the illustration of an old steam powered train. You have the locomotive (the old man, with his evil desires), next you have the coal car (the old nature, which fuels the old man), and finally you have the body of the train (my physical body).

Before I knew Jesus my sinful nature (which I received from Adam) was fueling the evil desires of my old man which in turn used the body to satisfy those desires by moving the body in the direction that the old me wanted it to go.

If you take away the locomotive, the coal car has nothing to feed and the train becomes inoperative.

The same is true with the old man. Take him away and the old nature has nothing to fuel and therefore the body, as the instrument of sin, is rendered inoperative.

And yes, there is a battle that goes on because we still have that *“old nature”* in us and it tries to resurrect itself. Thus, we must take in the Word of God and apply the Word of God to our lives asking that the Holy Spirit work in us and give us the ability to walk according to the high calling by which we have been called!

Martyn Lloyd-Jones offers a helpful illustration of the believer’s relation to his old sinful disposition. He pictures two adjoining fields, one owned by Satan and one owned by God, that are separated by a road. Before salvation, a person lives in Satan’s field and is totally subject to his jurisdiction. After salvation, a person works in the other field, now subject only to God’s jurisdiction. As he plows in the new field, however, the believer is often tempted by his former master, who seeks to entice him back into the old sinful ways. Satan often succeeds in temporarily drawing the believer’s attention away from his new Master and his new way of life. But he is powerless to draw the believer back into the old field of sin and death. (We have been delivered from the tyranny of Satan, but not the temptation of Satan.)

Now that phrase **“has been freed from sin”** in verse 7 can literally be translated, **“has been justified or declared righteous.”**

That is what God has done for us if we receive the free gift of life that is found in Him! Don’t be a slave to sin but be free in Christ!

And in verse 8, since we have identified ourselves with the death of Christ, knowing also that He was raised from the dead, it gives to us assurance that we too have been raised with Him!

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 15:20-22, **“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”**

If death has no dominion over Jesus, we can have assurance it will have no dominion over us! The new man does not just have life, but eternal life, everlasting life!

Thus, this new life that God has given to us we live unto God.

Of this Spurgeon said, “If God has given to you and me an entirely new life in Christ, how can that new life spend itself after the fashion of the old life? Shall the spiritual live as carnal? How can you that were the servants of sin, but have been made free by precious blood, go back to your old slavery?”

You see, it wouldn’t make sense to go back to the old life.

Now, of this new life in Christ Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:17-24, **“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”**

Over and over in the Scriptures we see the warning of putting to death the flesh, to walk in the newness of life that we have in Christ.

Also, in Colossians 3:9-10 Paul tells us, **“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.”**

Make no mistake about it, we are a new creation in Christ – not resuscitation but a transformation, thus, we need to live accordingly!

And keep in mind that when Paul says that Jesus Christ died to sin, it means that He not only died to ***THE PENALTY OF SIN***; but He also died to ***THE POWER OF SIN!***

And, again, that is what resurrection life is all about, that abundant life we have in Christ, what He has done for us and now we must walk accordingly.

Remember when the friend of Jesus died in John chapter 11. He was in the tomb for four days and then Jesus cried out to him, ***“Lazarus, come forth!”*** and he did.

The problem for Lazarus, as he came to the door of the tomb, was that he was wrapped in grave clothes.

And Jesus commanded them to, ***“Loose him, and let him go!”***

In a sense, he was raised in the newness of life. The problem was that he couldn't walk in the newness of life until the graveclothes were removed!

Now you may be thinking, ***“How do we get our graveclothes off? How can we walk in that newness of life?”***

That is the sanctification process that begins the moment we get saved and it will continue on until we go to be with the Lord. The Lord is purging out the garbage in our lives so that we can be more like Him!

And Paul is going to drive this point home even more as we read on. Don't let sin reign in your mortal body, to play with sin, but crucify the flesh and live for the Lord!

VERSES 11-12

Do you think that this resurrection life was important to Paul? You bet it was and is. That is why he keeps driving this point home to the church in Rome.

Keep in mind that Rome was wicked, it was immoral, and not much different than our nation today. And it is easy to get drawn back into those things that we did before we were saved.

Thus, Paul says, “**. . . reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” Romans 6:11.

The Greek word that Paul uses here for “**reckon**” is an accounting term. And the idea here is that we have to put this into our account by faith that we are dead to sin and alive in Christ!

Why is that? Because we still have these bodies of flesh and the flesh nature does try to resurrect itself and control our lives from time-to-time.

Thus, by faith I believe the old life was put to death and we wait for the redemption of our bodies when this flesh nature will be done away with, when this corruptible body has put on incorruption and this mortal body has put on immortality. It simply means to believe that what God says in His Word is really true in your life - it's a settled fact!

And yes, we are dead to the old life, but it does not mean we will not sin. Martin Luther put it like this, “You can't stop birds from flying around your head, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair.” How true that is!

Sin and temptation are all around you, there is nothing you can do about it, but you can keep it from nesting in your mind!

Paul put it this way in Romans 8:18-23, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”** We wait for that day!

And in Romans 6:12 Paul continues this thought of not letting sin reign or have control of our lives. Don't be in bondage to the sin you have been set free from!

Don't let sin reign in your body as it did before you were saved. How often we forget that because we try to accomplish the work in our flesh, or we just don't believe it, or we just don't care or don't know the truth.

Remember these words that Jesus said in John 8:36, **“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”** Praise the Lord for that, we are free in Christ!

Now some feel that God has restrained us and that is not fair. Let me share this with you because you will see that our God loves us so much that all He does is to protect us and bless us. We are told,

Eating lunch at a small cafe, Mark Reed of Camarillo, California, saw a sparrow hop through the open door and peck at the crumbs near his table. When the crumbs were gone, the sparrow hopped to the window ledge, spread its wings, and took flight. Brief flight. It crashed against the windowpane and fell to the floor.

The bird quickly recovered and tried again. Crash. And again. Crash.

Mark got up and attempted to shoo the sparrow out the door, but the closer he got, the harder it threw itself against the pane. He nudged it with his hand. That sent the sparrow fluttering along the ledge, hammering its beak at the glass.

Finally, Mark reached out and gently caught the bird, folding his fingers around its wings and body. It weighed almost nothing. He thought of how powerless and vulnerable the sparrow must have felt. At the door he released it, and the sparrow sailed away.

As Mark did with the sparrow, God takes us captive only to set us free.

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Don't put yourself in bondage to sin, we have been set free in Christ, and thus, walk accordingly.

Now, that sounds great, but how can we walk in that new life? Paul is going to give us some practical help in living in that freedom that Jesus has given to us! Look at verse 13 of Romans chapter 6.

VERSES 13-14

That new life we have in Christ, that resurrection life is for us today! And here is the key to walking in freedom. Don't present the various parts of your body to the service of sin.

I think the New Living Translation puts this idea across for us very nicely as it says, **“Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires. Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.”**

Think about this for a minute. Tools or weapons can be used for good or for evil, thus, use them for good or you will incur a self-inflicted wound if you use these weapons, your body for evil!

What do I mean by parts of our body being used for evil? Don't let your eyes see things that are evil, don't let your ears hear things that are evil, don't let your mind wander to evil thoughts, don't use your hands for evil, don't run to evil and-so-on.

It is amazing the bondage that the flesh can place us in. Let me share this with you and you will clearly see what I mean.

While staying with my friends Tim and Jill Jones, I watched their hamster, Hammy, in his little cage. Hammy has a warm nest of cedar shavings to curl up in, a water bottle to drink from, and best of all, a wheel he can run inside of. He has everything a hamster could want or need.

But Hammy refuses to run inside his running wheel. Instead, he has come up with what he thinks is a better idea. Hammy climbs up on top of the wheel, turns over on his back on the top of the wheel, and stretches out. Gradually the wheel starts to turn, and Hammy's entire body rolls with it, head first. The wheel picks up speed and spins faster and faster until clunk! Hammy's head smacks on the bottom of the cage. Hammy gets up, shakes himself, apparently hurt from the unexpected sharp blow on his head.

But what does Hammy do? He climbs back up on top of the wheel, turns over, stretches himself out, and gets ready to clunk his head again. Why? Why would a hamster who has everything he needs disregard the wheel's proper use and do something that only hurts himself? And why, even after that, would he do it again?

The bigger question is, why do humans, who are supposedly smarter than hamsters, sometimes do the same thing?

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That is exactly what Satan does. He puts things before us and we don't have to go down that path, we don't have to be locked in the prison of sin, but we desire it so much that it controls our lives and that bondage gets to be overwhelming to us.

And we get up on that wheel of sin, and we are spun around, and we crash, and then we get back up and sit back on that wheel of sin that goes around and around and around, and it keeps us in bondage!

Jesus has set us free, legally speaking, and we can walk in that freedom from sin whenever we want. But if you yield to your bodily appetites to serve sin, you will live a life of defeat, a life of discouragement, a life of imprisonment!

It is as Psalm 1:1-3 says, **“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.”**

So don't present yourself as instruments of unrighteousness, don't team up with Satan.

And the second key to walking in freedom and not remaining a slave to sin is to present yourself to God, let Him use your life instead of having your body be used as a weapon of evil, let God use it for good!

Do you see the two-step approach here? Crucify the old man, cut off any connection with the flesh life, do away with it. Now there is a void and that void is replaced with being used by God as His instrument to make beautiful music by so that the world might hear and be drawn to God.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:22-24, **“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”**

Who are you serving, who are you a slave to? You see, whoever it is will be manifested in your life. May it be Jesus!

Therefore, if you do these things then sin will not have control of your life, it will not be lord over you.

That doesn't mean you won't struggle. What it means is that which once controlled your life is no longer in control of your life, God is! You see, true freedom is not to live after the flesh, but after God!

And notice what Romans 6:14 tells us. It is not the Law that sets us free, the Law keeps us in bondage.

But a life lived in the grace of God is a life that is truly free! It is as Denny said, “It is not restraint but inspiration that liberates from sin; not Mount Sinai but Mount Calvary which makes saints.”

You see, the Law defines God’s Standard, perfection! And it shows us how far short of that standard we are! But the Law can never give to us the freedom from sin that grace does! Grace, not the Law provides the freedom and the power to live over sin!

Thus, remember that God is working in us, the sanctification process, as John tells us **“Whoever abides in Him does not [habitually] sin. Whoever [habitually] sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. . . . Whoever has been born of God does not [habitually] sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot [habitually] sin, because he has been born of God.”**

I John 3:6, 9.

Listen to what happened on that resurrection morning. In Matthew chapter 28, beginning in verse 1, we are told, **“Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.’ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So**

they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.’ Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.” And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” Matthew 28:1-15.

Make no mistake about it. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ not only saves us, but it completely changes our lives! May we live according to the high calling by which we have been called. May we not be slaves to sin because we are free in Christ!

And, in a world that is in darkness, may the way we live out our faith be a light to the people of this world, that they might see Jesus!

Resurrection changes everything – at least it should!