

Living in Resurrection Power

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	5
---------------------------	---

<i>Chapter 1</i>	7
------------------------	---

SUNDAY DID COME

<i>Chapter 2</i>	12
------------------------	----

THE STONE IS ROLLED AWAY

<i>Chapter 3</i>	18
------------------------	----

LIFE CONQUERS DEATH

<i>Chapter 4</i>	22
------------------------	----

MADE NEW BY RESURRECTION LIFE

<i>Chapter 5</i>	25
------------------------	----

DOUBT IS DEFEATED

<i>CONCLUSION</i>	33
-------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

There is no one in the tomb where they laid Jesus. It is empty. On that Resurrection Sunday, Jesus Christ came forth, just as He said He would. Resurrection power made Him alive again. Death was conquered once and for all.

Why is it then that so many live as if He were still in the grave? The men and women who walked with Jesus for three years witnessed countless demonstrations of the power at work in Him. Still, many of them were consumed with fear and doubt. Darkness *did* have its hour. Jesus really did die on that cross. All did seem lost on that Friday.

And yet, Sunday did come. Jesus was alive. In compassion and glory, He revealed Himself to the disciples in resurrection form. The record of it all is there for us. Christ Himself said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29b).

We have a risen Savior at work in us today.

By His resurrection power, we can enjoy total victory in every area of life.

Chapter One
SUNDAY DID COME

“Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy [Spirit] had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:2-3).

John outran Peter to the tomb that Sunday morning after the crucifixion (John 20:1-10). And yet, it was not Christ’s resurrection they were anticipating. The fact that His body was missing made them think that the power of darkness really had been triumphant.

In Luke 22:53, Jesus announced to those who arrested him, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” Indeed, there are many times when the power of darkness believes it has won, and many of us have experienced that feeling.

On one Friday, Caiaphas the high priest, the Pharisees, the scribes, and the Sadducees, along with the Roman government, thought that they were completely effective in getting rid of this “blasphemer.” They thought they had finally defeated the One they accused of drinking wine, the One they accused of being a womanizer, the One they accused of taking money under the table (Luke 7:34). Jesus, of course, hadn’t done any of those things. But the hour had come when His accusers believed they were finally victorious. Satan and all the armies of hell felt that they had finally defeated Jesus Christ and the cause of Christianity.

But this was Friday. And for those who thought they had won the victory, there was one problem with Friday: Sunday was coming.

According to the Jewish measure of time, any part of a day was considered a day. When Jesus said, “I will rise on the third day,” that statement was entirely accurate. The mystery is that on *many* occasions Jesus predicted He would come forth (Matthew 20:19), but John 20:9 says of the disciples: “For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.” The disciples heard it many times, but still, they “knew not the scripture.” Even James,

Jesus' half-brother, did not know the Scriptures, and he did not believe upon Jesus until after the Resurrection.

Think of it. They witnessed His many miracles, such as raising the dead and healing the sick. They saw what He accomplished with His loving grace to forgive sins. They watched His amazing compassion flow out to the multitudes. Yet, though He told them He would come forth from the grave, they knew not the Scriptures.

This is one of the great problems we have at this hour. So many people who go to churches do not know, understand, or experience what God has said. In the dark times, they do not realize that their Sunday is coming.

Victory Will Be Ours

A woman lost two daughters in a car accident caused by a drunken driver. The crash also put her husband in the hospital for months. In her devastating pain, she listened to our Grace Hour radio broadcast and heard the good news that Christ died for her, was buried, and rose again. She became gloriously saved, and in a letter she wrote, "I will see my two daughters again. They were killed by that drunk driver. But thank God, the day is coming when I will be

with them again.”

No matter what your problem is, your Sunday is coming.

Caiaphas, you can mistreat Jesus. Go ahead and have your fun. This is your time of darkness. Pharisees, with your hypocrisy and your religious pretense, you think you are so right in going against the Son of God. But, you will find out on Sunday that you were wrong! Sadducees, you do not believe in a resurrection. You have argued that there would be no resurrection. Yet some of you will have to believe it when Sunday comes around.

Darkness Shall Be Defeated

Today, the gay rights movement pushes for their rights to get legally married and even to adopt children. While we would do anything to help anyone come out of this terrible, degrading lifestyle, we understand that it attacks the institution of marriage, it goes against family values, and God hates it.

God loved homosexuals enough to die for them (John 3:16-17). If any will turn to Him, He will save them, forgive them, cleanse them, and give them brand-new beginnings. But God rejects their lifestyle. They will find out that ho-

homosexuality and lesbianism are absolutely corrupt and wrong, breaking down families and marriages. One day, Sunday will come, and they will see how wrong they are.

People who live in premarital sex or have affairs outside of their marriage are absolutely wrong—the *Bible* says so. Jesus paid for those sins, and He paid to make a way for holy, honorable marriages that have virtue, values, God's love, purity, and conviction. The attitude of the world says, "You don't have to get married. Just live together. And if you are unfulfilled in your marriage, let someone else satisfy your flesh." Those values are absolutely from hell. They are wrong. But for every believer who refuses to compromise the truth of God's Word, Sunday will come. Thank God.

Chapter Two

THE STONE IS ROLLED AWAY

“Peter, how do you feel now that Jesus is gone?”

If we had talked to Peter after Christ was crucified, he may have said, “I feel terrible. I cursed him. I denied Him, and now He’s gone forever.”

In Luke 24, after Jesus was resurrected, Peter not only saw the empty tomb, he walked into it himself. Still, he was perplexed and didn’t believe what the Lord had told him. Even after he saw Christ twice in resurrection form, Peter backslid and went back fishing because of shame and guilt (see John 21).

What of the others who were close to Jesus?

“Disciples, why did you forsake Him?”

“We were afraid. It was a terrible time. Everyone was against Him. And as the people yelled, ‘Crucify Him! Crucify!’ we were afraid.”

“Mary Magdalene, He delivered you from

seven demons. How do you feel?" (Luke 8:2).

"My heart is broken. He loved me. He let me break the alabaster box of spikenard and pour it out on Him. He let me wash His feet with my tears. I miss Him. Oh, how I miss Him! But He is dead."

"Mary, you were the mother of Jesus. How do you feel?"

"I remember the things that were told to me. But I can't understand it. I just don't understand it!"

All of those people walked closely with Him. His half-brothers and half-sisters did not believe upon Him. In the gloom, darkness, sadness, and grief that came on Friday, fear filled the hearts of those who seemingly had faith. It is a mystery of iniquity that no one believed He would come forth.

The Record of His Appearances

On Sunday morning, the tomb was still sealed with the Roman seal. On Friday, a huge stone had been rolled against it and roped into place. Anyone who broke that seal would be punished by death. But the Roman guards didn't punish the angel that came and broke the seal. Instead, they just stood there, so paralyzed with

fear that they couldn't do a thing.

Then, the Lord Jesus Christ came out of that tomb. The stone didn't have to be removed to let Him out; it had to be removed to let us in! Sunday finally had come.

A study of the historical context of that day reveals that a woman's witness was not accepted in those times. So what did God do? He first appeared to a woman, Mary Magdalene. When she came to the tomb, He appeared to her. Not to Peter, not to John, not to James, but to Mary.

After her, three more women came to the tomb. Then He appeared to Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5) and then to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). In John 20:19-25, He appeared once to the disciples as they gathered in the upper room, though Thomas was absent. In John 20:26-29, He appeared to them again. This time, Thomas was there.

He appeared to seven disciples who had gone back fishing, in John 21. He also appeared before five hundred (1 Corinthians 15:6). Next He appeared to James, His half-brother, who did not believe He was the Son of God until that moment (1 Corinthians 15:7). He again appeared to the eleven disciples, and finally, for the last time on earth, they saw Him go up on Ascension day

(see Acts 1:2-9).

With all of these eyewitness accounts, we know without a doubt that Sunday did come. Amen.

Fellowshipping with His Power

No matter what condition you are in, victory is on the way if you trust God. Perhaps you are in bondage to drugs. Victory is on the way! God will come in and give you victory and power. Your Sunday will come.

Maybe you have a problem with alcohol. God loves you. Your Sunday will come. Perhaps you have physical problems and you are sickly, or lonely, and sometimes you feel depressed. Sunday is coming for you.

Let's learn to fellowship intimately with the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings (Philippians 3:10). Just realize what it means. No longer are we dead in trespasses and sins. No longer are we defeated. No longer are our sins written in the record books of heaven. No longer are we destined to die in the dungeon of darkness, shackled by sin. No longer do we have to fear tomorrow.

If it were not so, Jesus would have told us. He declares, "I am he that liveth, and was dead;

and, behold, I am alive for ever more, Amen” (Revelation 1:18a). Even as we see our loved ones pass away at different ages—some old, some very young—we can thank God that whosoever lives and believes in Him shall never die (John 11:26).

Our Sunday has come. There is an empty tomb. We have power over sin because sin has been paid for. We can have victory over soulish emotions, and victory over the old sin nature through the Cross of Calvary and the resurrection power of the Spirit. Our Sunday has come.

A mother called me to say that her husband left her and their five children. “My three-year-old and five-year-old cry for their daddy every night,” she said. “I don’t understand why God let him do that.”

“God had nothing to do with his leaving,” I told her, “but victory is going to come for you. As you stay in there, trust Jesus and abide. God will take care of you and those children. Meanwhile, we can hope and pray that God saves your husband and brings him back.”

Victory will come to the believer. We may live in the midst of the power of darkness. Darkness may have triumphed for a moment, but it will not reign over us because there has been a

resurrection. God loves to resurrect marriages. He loves to impart resurrection life to a husband and wife. He loves to see families raised with godly virtue, values, and resurrection love.

Chapter Three

LIFE CONQUERS DEATH

There is immeasurable value and virtue in Christ's resurrection. Not only is every sin paid for, but by the grace of God, a Christian is absent from the body and present with the Lord the moment he dies (2 Corinthians 5). Stephen was dying, and he saw Jesus stand up to meet him (Acts 7:55). That was a post-resurrection appearance. Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4-6). Later, in Arabia, he was taught by Jesus (Galatians 1:17). Four times, Paul had post-resurrection encounters with Jesus.

The apostle John on the Isle of Patmos at the age of 98 was tortured terribly, including being plunged into hot oil three times. Yet, John saw the glorified Christ who comforted him on that terrible island of persecution. Whatever terrible thing that can happen to a Christian will be followed by victory.

The three Hebrew boys were placed in a fur-

nace, and King Nebuchadnezzar thought he was triumphant (Daniel 3). But in that furnace was the Fourth Man. Those boys weren't hurt at all! Victory came out of a furnace that was turned up seven times hotter than ever before.

Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, and he was put there just when they were the most hungry. The angels put the lions to sleep.

After Daniel came out, the people who conspired to get him in there were placed in the same den. "Daniel's God delivered him," they were told. "You said he worshipped the wrong god, so let's see what happens with you in there." There was no angel to put the lions to sleep, and those people didn't last two minutes. All of them were consumed by the lions.

Satan has been defeated. As we pray for each other, regardless of the circumstances, we know that our Sunday will come. Adversity can attack us on the outside, but it doesn't have to be internalized as stress. Glory to God, we have resurrection joy and resurrection peace. We know that we know that we know that Jesus is resurrected! We have spiritual resurrection on the inside. Not once will sin be imputed to us. At no time do we have to carry guilt around. Our Sunday has come, and we can live as those

who have been raised from the dead (Romans 6:13).

Resurrected for a Purpose

With the resurrection power we have, we need to share the gospel. Recently I heard the testimony of a Christian woman who awoke from a terrible dream. In the dream, she received a letter from her friend, Marcia. The letter was written from hell. In it, Marcia blamed this woman for never telling her the truth about the gospel. "I cannot call you my friend now," Marcia wrote. "You never told me about Christ, and you *never* warned me about hell."

Though it was only a dream, it seemed so real. The woman awoke, shaken, and she promised herself she would call Marcia the next day and invite her to church. A day went by, and the details of life kept her distracted. When she finally made the call, Marcia's husband answered.

"Bill, can I speak to Marcia?" she said.

"Don't you know?" Bill answered. "I thought we had gotten word to you. Marcia was killed in a car accident last night." That is a true story.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold,

now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2*b*). We need to share the Good News *now*, so that “whosoever will” may come unto Jesus. Every time a soul is saved, there is joy in heaven in the presence of the angels (Luke 15:7-10). One lost soul receives resurrection life, heaven witnesses it, and there is joy.

Chapter Four

**MADE NEW BY
RESURRECTION LIFE**

Oh, if we could have spoken to some of the disciples after they believed that Jesus was really alive. Imagine Peter's response, to finally be able to rest in the Finished Work.

"Peter, how do you feel now that Sunday has come?"

"The Lord Jesus Christ forgave me. He gave me back my apostleship. His love is so great! He didn't judge me or put me on probation. He just said, 'Feed my sheep; feed my lambs.' He never rebuked me. Instead, Jesus looked at me with eyes full of compassion. Even in my defeat, He loved me and recommissioned me, as He did with all the other disciples that forsook Him (Matthew 26:56)."

"Mary Magdalene, what do you have to say now?"

"Thank God! I am so happy. He is alive! He

loved me so much, and delivered me from those demons. My old lifestyle is gone—I am no longer a prostitute. I just love Him so much for making me a brand-new creature.”

This is what Jesus does, friend. He is not in the condemning business; He is in the forgiving business. He hears your prayer. He will never leave you once you receive Him.

Make Jesus personal; He is real. Don't try to be religious. Don't settle for values only. Go beyond values and enter into godly virtue—virtue that can only come from God. There is human virtue just as there is moral light. But moral light replaced by spiritual light makes morality a spiritual blessing with God, because God does it all.

Jesus brings in spiritual light to control moral values. True virtue is the integrity of Jesus Christ operating in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the purity of love, executed through grace, using rebound in failure. God gives us virtue to control our values, and He gives spiritual light that goes way beyond moral light. God gives us more than divine establishment and national entity. He gives us His Kingdom within us.

This is the order of the work of God: The Planner is the Father, the Executor is the Son.

The Holy Spirit reveals the work, the Word of God describes it, and the Christian enjoys it as he receives it by faith.

Chapter Five
DOUBT IS DEFEATED

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God: because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Corinthians 15:14-19).

When Resurrection Sunday came, some were not as happy as they should have been. There were those who thought that Jesus was still in the tomb. They would not believe. This has happened to so many people, even though He told us otherwise. Every time Jesus spoke of His death, He also said, “I am going to be resur-

rected.” He never mentioned the Cross without mentioning the Resurrection.

Several disciples did not believe. Peter was perplexed when he entered into the tomb that morning (Luke 24). At that moment, he did not believe.

Believest Thou This?

There was another man who desperately wanted to believe, but he could not. He hated to doubt, and in his heart I am sure he was saying, “I have walked with Him; I have talked with Him; I have ministered with Him. I don’t want to doubt, but I do. I want to believe, but right now I can’t.”

This man may have been there when Jesus was baptized. If he could tell us the story of that day, it would probably go like this:

“I remember John the Baptist as a strange person, wearing camel’s hair and a leather girdle, eating locusts and wild honey. But every time he opened his mouth, he had just one message: ‘Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand.’

“When Jesus came, John the Baptist knew who He was, and he cried out, ‘Behold the Lamb of God.’ Jesus asked to be baptized by him, and John refused at first, saying, ‘I am not worthy to

do it.' But Jesus said, 'This is what God wants for right now.' So John baptized Jesus, and I saw the dove come from heaven. Jesus had always been filled with the Holy Spirit, but this time the dove came upon Him, and the Father said, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17).

Eyes of Compassion

This man who could not believe witnessed that scene. He watched the eyes of Jesus as He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). This man was there when the poor leper who had no hope in the world came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus said, "I will; be thou clean" (see Matthew 8:2-3).

He saw those things, yet in his heart, he was saying, "Jesus is still in the tomb; He hasn't come out. All my hopes are gone. I believed He was the answer. I watched His life so carefully, trying to find something wrong about it. Oh, I know He is still in that tomb."

This man saw how the Lord Jesus wonderfully healed and forgave the man with palsy (Matthew 9:2-8). "Seeing that gave me courage

and hope,” this man thought, “But He is not coming out of that tomb. After all the time I spent ministering with Him, I don’t want to doubt, but I do. I’m sorry, but I don’t believe He will rise. It’s just not going to happen.”

Jesus Stood Still

This man was with Jesus in Jericho when a filthy blind man cried out, “Son of David, have mercy on me.” The disciples charged him to keep still, but it was Jesus who stood still instead (Mark 10:46-52). Not a thing was happening with that crowd that followed Him from Jerusalem to Jericho. Yet, Jesus stopped for one blind man who cried out, “Have mercy on me.” As Jesus commanded them to bring the blind man to Him, this man heard Jesus address blind Bartimeus. “What would you have me to do?” Jesus asked. And he said, “Heal my sight.” Jesus healed him and forgave him.

With his own eyes, the doubtful man saw Jesus cast out legions of demons—thousands of them—from one man, and he watched as they were sent away into a herd of pigs. He was there when Jesus interrupted a funeral procession for the only son of a widow. He saw Jesus raise the boy from the dead and give him back to his

mother (Luke 7:14-15). He was outside the house when Jesus told a girl who had died, “Little darling, I say to you arise.” Not only did she get up, but also she served them (Luke 8:54-55).

If you were to have a conversation with this man, he would tell you, “I was there with the other disciples when a woman taken in adultery was pardoned. Protected from being stoned by her accusers, she wept with relief after Jesus said to her, ‘Does any man condemn you? Neither do I. Go and sin no more.’ I saw how He forgave her.”

This man saw the love in Jesus’ eyes when He healed the sick. He saw compassion come from the Lord when He forgave sin. It was wonderful. But he still believed that Jesus was in the tomb.

What would this man say for himself? “It was so painful, and I guess I was a coward—all of us disciples were cowards. We saw Him walk up the hill and fall down under the weight of the cross. We heard and saw the result of the thirty-nine lashes from the cat-o-nine tails, a whip riveted with thorns, metal, and stones. I saw it and it broke my heart. I was afraid. Fear came upon all of us, and we stood afar off. I did see it, and it brought such pain.”

Remembering the terrible details of that day, his eyes would close, and he would become quiet before he went on. “There were three crosses. He was on the cross in the middle, hanging there between two thieves. Just a few people were around, most of them were women. We had to admit it was over. I couldn’t believe. Of course, I wanted to believe, but I couldn’t. Jesus Christ wasn’t coming out of that grave. I couldn’t believe that He would.”

By now, you might have figured it out. This unbelieving man was *Thomas*.

His Sunday came a week later than the other disciples’. On the first Sunday, Jesus came to where the disciples were hiding (John 20:19). Yet Thomas, for fear of the Jews, was not there. The others told him how Jesus came right through the locked doors. They were all rejoicing because they had seen the Lord.

Thomas, however, wasn’t glad, though he was very honest, saying, “Except I put my finger into the nail prints in His hands and reach my hand into the wound in His side, I will not believe.”

Jesus Reaches Thomas

Jesus appeared again to the disciples in the

upper room. This time, He went straight to Thomas. “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing” (John 20:27).

Suddenly, Thomas realized that everything he had believed was true. Jesus had risen. “There *is* forgiveness! I *will* go to heaven,” he could now say. “*Everything* is beautiful.”

Thomas finally believed that we have a Savior who went through death, came alive, and was resurrected. He saw the wounds in Jesus’ hands, and all hope was renewed, all joy was kindled by the fire of the Holy Spirit. By the grace of Almighty God, Jesus is risen. When Jesus said, “Peace be unto you,” every cell in Thomas’ body was filled with joy. His Sunday had come and his doubts were gone. Now it was all real to him.

If we could interview him now, Thomas would probably say, “After Jesus ascended, I went on to be a missionary to India. Each day that went by, I remembered seeing Him in the upper room, resurrected. I was so ashamed that I had doubted Him. But He forgave me, just as He forgave Peter for his denials. I went on to India, to serve the risen Savior.”

When Thomas was martyred in India, he said, “Oh precious Jesus, I thank God that I could serve you on the mission field and die for you. I am so grateful. The pain is nothing because I am so in love with you.” No more a “doubting” Thomas—this was one man who really understood how to live by every Word of God in resurrection power.

CONCLUSION

I love the power of the Resurrection. Thank God that He doesn't put us in the grave where we would have to sleep for years before the Rapture. When a Christian dies, his soul leaves the body and the angels carry him straight to heaven. While we cry and mourn our loved ones, they are in heaven. They have traveled through space and time, which God controls and transcends. We may be here crying because we miss them, but they would say to us, "Believe what you have believed all these years. We are going up!"

For believers, Christ's resurrection means justification. It also means redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness, and sonship, as members of God's royal family. We are seated in heavenly places in our position. We have brand-new opportunities, brand-new beginnings. We are new creations—old things have passed away. Our old lives are gone, and everything is new. If we

fail, we name it and rebound because Jesus Christ paid for our sin, and we return to enjoying our fellowship with resurrection life.

Life in Christ gives us the power of grace, the power of the Spirit, and the power of love and friendship. With godly values and virtue, we will always be victorious. Faith will conquer. Oh, what God will do when He sees a heart that will trust Him.

Father, thank You that we can look forward to more than this life. We love You and praise You that Yours is an empty tomb. Resident in our bodies is the same divine power that raised Jesus from the dead and will raise our bodies from the dead as well. This resurrection power heals leprosy and palsy. It heals fevers. It has raised the dead, cast out demons, and changed men's and women's lives forever. This power gives us victory over personal sin.

Lord, You are the same yesterday, today, and forever. We thank you that Your grace shows us how to pray. Please bless us with resurrection power in every realm of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.