

Sermon on Romans 8:9-11 for Easter prepared by Jonathan Shradar

Stand for the reading of the word.

Romans 8:1-11

In Christ, resurrection is our life.

I want to soar today! Think of soaring over the world (or California) at Disney. Flying high above everything. Feeling the wind in your hair and catching glimpses of the beauty around you.

That's what I desire to do today. Be lifted by the truth that our Savior is risen, that death is defeated, that eternal life begins now with Jesus.

This soaring leads somewhere, to life. To freedom, newness, to unwavering confidence in the purpose of God.

And it begins in a garden.

From the death of Christ on the cross, the sacrifice for sin once for all.

Mark 16:1–7 “When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. [2] And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. [3] And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” [4] And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. [5] And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. [6] And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. [7] But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” (ESV)

From that telling, the church is born. The Spirit of God takes up residence in his people and applies the resurrection to our lives.

In Christ, resurrection is our life.

We need life - and it is only found here.

Romans 8 soars. Sets us to soaring.

And part of the proclamation is that the resurrection is for you and gives you what is Christ's new life.

The resurrection is real, for eternity, for now.

1. **The resurrection is real.**

Even as we break from the routine, focus on the gift of Easter, we don't want to take it for granted.

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead..." Paul's whole view on the Spirit's work in our lives is anchored on the reality of the resurrection.

But the truth is, plenty of people don't believe it's true. Even people sitting in pews this morning don't believe and prefer Jesus as a delightful moral teacher who is now dead.

Paul, writing to the church in Corinth, confronted the reality of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:1–8 "Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

[3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me." (ESV)

Jesus appeared after his resurrection to more than 500 people. A radical reality that was promised in Scripture. He is alive!

But the miraculous is so hard for us to believe. From physical death to life... seems like too much.

If there is no resurrection however, none of this matters, there is no Christianity, it's that central. Paul goes on...

1 Corinthians 15:14–19 “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. [15] We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. [17] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19] If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.” (ESV)

1 Corinthians 15:20–22 “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (ESV)

The course of human history is evidence of the reality of the resurrection. Eye witnesses gave themselves to proclaim it as the foundation of the church.

“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.” - Chuck Colson

Jesus' burial confirms that he really died, and his appearances to eyewitnesses confirm that he truly rose. So we are not building our lives on myth or legend when we look to him for grace to pardon our sins and empower holy living.

The resurrection is real.

2. The resurrection is for eternity.

Christ's resurrection robs death of its victory.

Romans 8:11b “he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” (ESV)

Life for your mortal bodies... these things will go on. For those of the Spirit (the ya'll of verse 9, the church), the temporary decay and physical death we experience is not an eternal reality.

Just as the Spirit gave life to Jesus, he will give life to our bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:50–55 “I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. [51] Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. [53] For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. [54] When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

[55] “O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?” (ESV)

When Jesus returns to remake the world fully and finally, we too, our physical/mortal bodies will be resurrected and remade for his glory.

What a reunion that will be!

Eternity in light of the resurrection shapes how we face mortality, disease, grief of loss. See it all as light and momentary compared to the eternity to come.

There are many difficult things we experience, disability, sickness, and the realities of aging. But they don't get the last word.

Heard of an oncologist with this framed on their office wall:

“What Cancer Cannot Do
Cancer is so limited.....
It cannot cripple love,
It cannot shatter hope,
It cannot corrode faith,
It cannot eat away peace,
It cannot destroy confidence,
It cannot kill friendship,
It cannot shut out memories,
It cannot silence courage,
It cannot invade the soul,
It cannot reduce eternal life,
It cannot quench the spirit,
It cannot lessen the power of the Resurrection.
-Author Unknown

Let the resurrection give you the hope of eternity.

3. The resurrection is for today.

Not only does the life given to our mortal bodies in v. 11 apply to eternity, because Paul dives right into putting the flesh to death (the parts of us that reject God) this means this life is to be experienced now.

As he will say two chapters before our text.

Romans 6:5–11 “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. [6] We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. [7] For one who has died has been set free from sin. [8] Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. [9] We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. [10] For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. [11] So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (ESV)

By the resurrection and the power of the Spirit we go to war on sin, we experience transformation, and the type of soaring above it all that can only be called the peace of Christ. It is what is promised in Jesus. It's us becoming like him.

“Christians know by experience that true religion is a union of the soul with God, a real participation in the divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul, or, in the apostle's phrase, "it is Christ formed within us".” – Henry Scougal, *Life of God in the Soul of Man*

“The clear implication of Paul’s use of the phrase “the Spirit of Christ” is that through the Spirit we experience something of Jesus’ disposition—his kindness, his gentle care, his love in our lives. As we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us, we are filled with the ethos of Jesus, and life becomes more and more to us what it was and is to him.” Hughes

As the church of Jesus Christ, we do not live under the bondage of sin, but under the freedom of Christ—the freedom of the *resurrection life!*

“Not even Satan and all his companions can deter what God has worked in the resurrection of his Son. Through Christ's Spirit, the believer is in complete union with the victory of Christ's resurrection, and you live that resurrection presently in heavenly union with your beloved Savior, even as you continue to journey on earth.”

The Father applies to the church and its members the resurrection life of the Son by the Spirit.

Romans 6:4 “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (ESV)

Because of the renewing force of Christ’s resurrection, believers are no longer bound to succumb to sin and the flesh. If they believe God raised the Son, they should also believe God’s presence in their life and the church means they are raised above the “law of sin and death”.

A whole new life. We need this newness today. It’s what the world needs.

It's breath when we felt like we couldn't breathe.
It's a cool drink of water when we could go on no further in the desert.
It's life when all we had was death.

Some of us feel like this is aspiration, a life just out of reach, hopeful but not current experience. We may feel like we are hanging on by a thread... when the thread is a resurrected Jesus, that's more than enough!

Resurrection is what the power of God does with our weakness and death.

God's "righteousness" through the gospel means (among much else) that the Spirit brings life (8:10). The Spirit who raised Jesus transforms believers' everyday lives (v. 11) as he "dwells" among God's people and in their personal spheres. Paul teaches that the very resurrection life of Christ dwells in those who have been united to this risen Lord.

Say no to the old life of the flesh, say yes to resurrection life.

In Christ, resurrection is our life.

We respond how those that witnessed the resurrection did...

John 20:11-18 "But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"

“There is a magic moment in time when only one person in the whole world, one person walking planet Earth, knew the good news of “He’s alive,” the ultimate “breaking news” that would forever change the course of humanity. For that brief, sacred instant, this one person was the whole Church. The whole Jesus story hinged on what that one person would do with the truth. Would she cherish it and keep it to herself? Or would she share it with others and become, as the Roman Catholic church even titles this person, “the apostle to the apostles?”

Of course, this one person who was trusted with the whole story was Mary Magdala, or Mary “Strong Tower” (the meaning of Magdala in Aramaic). She was there when all the other disciples fled. She stood firm in her faith when all others doubted. She saw angels when Peter and John only saw stacks of dirty laundry. All four gospels are unanimous that Mary of Magdala was the premier witness to the Crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus. She stays and suffers when all others run and waver. . . . And all this at a time when the testimony of any woman was unvalued and, more than that, not to be trusted. The whole story hangs on one single, fragile thread . .

Each one of us, no matter how seemingly insignificant or marginalized, is a single, fragile thread that has been entrusted with a truth that can change lives and shape destinies. Like Mary, we may find ourselves standing alone in the face of doubt, fear, and opposition. We may feel like a lone string wondering if our voice will be heard or if our faith will make a difference.

But Mary teaches us that when we hold fast to our faith, when we bear witness to the truth, and when we step out in faith to share the Good News with others, we become part of a tapestry woven by God - a beautiful, unbreakable fabric that tells the story of redemption and hope.

Our faith, our testimony, and our willingness to share the truth all matter. You may feel like a solitary voice in a world ricocheting with racket and dissonance, but your words have the power to ignite change, to bring comfort, and to lead others to the feet of the risen and rising Savior. God wants to use your single, precious, fragile thread to create something beautiful and eternal, a tapestry of truth that carries the greatest news the world has ever known.

Just say Yes."