Sermon: Living in the Power of the Resurrection

Romans 6:1-11

**Introduction**

 Good morning and welcome on this Resurrection Sunday! It is a joy to be in the Lord’s house with you all and to share in this celebration of new life! The resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone foundational teaching of the Christian faith and it is the promise of new life and victory through His resurrection that followers of Christ place their hope. With the time that we have together this morning we are going to study the writing of the Apostle Paul in His epistle to the church in Rome regarding the resurrection of Jesus. When he was writing this epistle, he was addressing a topic that not every Jew had the same view of. In the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem for example there were two groups of teachers who had differing views regarding the resurrection of the dead. The first group was known as the Pharisees who served as teachers of the law who did believe that at the end of time there would be a resurrection of those who were faithful to God through obedience to the Law of Moses. At the end of time there would be a resurrection of all, some to eternal life with God and others punished for their rejection of the one true God. The other group were the Saduccees. They did not believe that there would be a resurrection of the dead and therefore did not believe in the afterlife. They believed that living a life in obedience to God would result in either blessings or curses in this present life and that there would not be a future life in heaven with God. The Apostle Paul in his writing spends a lot of time refuting the Saduccees and making it clear that Jesus Christ, being raised from the dead, is the first fruit of those who would come to faith in Him and that they as well will experience a resurrection from the dead. Our goal this morning is to encourage one another with the word of God and celebrate the resurrection of Christ as being proof of the hope we all have in Him. Please refer to your bulletin or open your Scripture to the book of Romans chapter 6. Let us read verses 1-11 together: **“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 Far from it! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for the one who has died is freed from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all time; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 So you too, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”**

**The Concept of Cheap Grace (v. 1)**

 As we begin looking at the passage today, we see that Paul starts his discussion by asking a very important question. He is essentially asking “Since the grace of God increases when sin increases, why should we not keep sinning?” This would be the idea that since God is going to forgive me anyway, why shouldn’t I just sin and then ask for forgiveness after the fact? This is what I have heard many times referred to as cheap grace. Grace is cheapened when it is viewed as a way to be forgiven for sinning after someone has deliberately sinned. This is putting God to the test, which is condemned in Scripture. What we need to make clear, and this is also what Paul is teaching, is that grace is not a license to sin; it’s the power to live righteously through the power of God. When God gives us His grace through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, He is not doing this so that we can sin without fear, He is doing this to give us a new life in Christ. Therefore, the first point we need to make is that the power of the gospel not only changes the standing we have with Holy God, but it also changes the way that we live.

**We Have Died with Christ (vv. 2-4)**

Paul continues in verse 2 by answering the question he posed in verse 1. He says emphatically that the answer is no. He says that we who have died to sin are to no longer be living in it. The death that Christ faced was the model of what happens to all believers of Christ through the waters of baptism. When we are baptized into Christ we have been baptized into His death. What Paul is saying is that baptism in the name of Christ is symbolic of what Christ did for us and that when we are baptized, we are following in His footsteps by allowing our old self to die along with the old nature of sin. After the old self has died, we experience a resurrection in the fact that we now can walk in newness of life. Baptism is the public profession of faith in Christ and serves as a reminder that Christ died to free His people from the curse of sin, then His resurrection defeated the sting of death meaning that we no longer have to fear the grave. Once we have been sealed with the blood of Christ we are forgiven and are made a new creation in the sight of God. We now walk in a new life where we no longer are dominated by the sinful nature, we are now guided by love for God and for others which we desire to show in our obedience to His Word. We also perform good deeds not to earn salvation, but to show others the appreciation we have for the sacrifice our God has made for us.

**United with Christ in His Death (vv. 5-7)**

In this chapter Paul is discussing the way that all those who trust in Christ have had the old person die to sin, but the new person is made alive in Christ. Paul teaches that when we place our faith in Christ, we are united with Him in His death. Our old self was crucified with Him so that the old life that was ruled by sin is done away with. In making this old self die to sin we no longer have to be slaves to that sin. When Christ died, He broke the power that sin has over our lives. When we are united with Him through faith, Paul is telling us that our sinful self has died with Him. This is what Paul means when he says later in verse 11 that we are dead to sin, but alive in Christ. Just like a slave is no longer under the master’s rule after death, a person who dies to sin is no longer under sin’s control. This does not mean that we will never sin again, but it does mean that sin no longer has ownership over us. We are no longer obligated to obey sin like we were before. In our old way of life all we knew was the way of sin and we were blinded by our own self interest and desires. In his epistle to the Ephesians Paul writes **“that, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (4:22-24).** The old self only knows corruption with the lusts of deceit. Before the Holy Spirit takes root after someone is born again the old self is easily manipulated into doing all that aligns with lust and the pleasures of this life. Therefore, what Paul is teaching is that when someone comes to faith in Christ and experiences the new birth the old way of life dies and the new creation desires to live in obedience to God in righteousness and holiness. Now when that person sins, they know they have wronged God and their desire is to repent and do those things that are pleasing to Him. This is what dying to sin means, the old self enslaved to sin no longer rules.

**Raised to New Life in Christ (vv. 8-10)**

 Since we have died to sin with Christ, we are also resurrected with Him as a new creation. The death of Christ is the once and for all victory over sin and death. In verse 8 Paul says that since we have died with Him, we will also live with Him. This new life that we have in His name is lived in the same spirit that Christ lives. We now have the promise of eternal life in the presence of God the Father because Christ also lives in His Father’s presence. We will be like Him in the fact that we will no longer have to fear death. Once we face physical death here on this earth, we will never have to face it again. In like manner Jesus died to redeem all who place their trust in Him and He will never face death again because in His death the curses of sin and the grave have been defeated. Because He conquered death, those who believe in Him are promised eternal life. This means that death is not the end- it becomes a doorway to new, eternal life with God.

 The other aspect of the resurrection is now that Christ has overcome death He will never die again because death is no longer master over Him. In what way did Christ allow death to become the master over Him? When Christ came to earth, He laid aside His glory and His eternal existence with God to take on human flesh, exist in time and allow Himself to face the death that all of us deserve to face. By arriving as a baby, He grew, aged and experienced all of the emotions and physical changes that each of us face. In dying such a brutal death, He experienced the physical pain as well as the spiritual darkness when the Father turned His back on Him.

 However, on Sunday morning when He was resurrected back to life, He defeated the curse of death for all those who trust Him. The resurrection of Christ gives believers a fresh start, which we know as a spiritual rebirth. Not only has life been restored to a physical body that was dead, but a spiritual transformation takes place as well. This new birth results in a transformed life that includes new priorities, a new identity as a child of God rather than a child of Satan and the life lived in obedience to the Father has a brand-new purpose. We no longer live for ourselves and our lusts, we now live for God and for the purpose of building His kingdom here on earth.

 Let’s take a moment and look at verse 10 carefully. Christ died to sin once and for all, but the new life He lives is lived to God. This is the main idea of the message today and why the resurrection of Christ is so important to the world. All who believe in Christ and trust Him for their salvation have the power to live victoriously in the hope of the resurrection that all of us will experience one day. With this hope of the future resurrection, we can face the struggles of this life, grow in love with others, and live out our faith with courage and hope knowing that no matter what may happen to us on this earth we belong to the Lord and we have been sealed with the promise of eternal life.

**Live in the Hope of Your New Identity (v. 11)**

Paul ends his instruction in the passage my making the point that we are to now consider ourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. In what ways can be show this new life that God has blessed us with? We need to live out the faith that we claim to possess every day showing others that not only has Christ overcome the curse of sin and death by His sacrifice, but that the power of His resurrection has also changed us. The best way to show others the power of the resurrection is to daily live out our faith in a way that can be seen by others. This testimony serves as the proof that Christ is alive and that He is living through those who believe in Him. As the Apostle James writes**, “Faith without works is dead.” (James 2:17).**

 We also must remember that sin is no longer our master, Christ is. He is our master because He has paid the price for our salvation and has purchased it with His own blood. The ransom that He paid is the sacrifice He made which was the life of a king given in place of us. Our new identity is a forgiven sinner who has been redeemed and made acceptable in the sight of Holy God through the blood of Christ.

 Finally, we must remember that we no longer are living for ourselves, but just as Christ now lives His life for the Father, we are doing that as well. This means that everything we do is to be done for the glory and honor of God. Every decision we make and every action we take in this world must be carefully considered because we no longer are living for our own sakes, we are now living as citizens of the kingdom of God. On this Resurrection Sunday let us renew our commitment to live in courage and victory knowing that our God has defeated the curse of sin and death clearing the road to heaven through the shed blood of Christ. Amen.