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## The Work of the Resurrection in Us

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### Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESV)

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

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The most famous verse in the Bible has to be John 3:16: *For God so loved the world that he sent his one and only Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

I'm so encouraged today to have the opportunity to bring to you some encouragements for your life—about what this gift of Jesus, what the work of Jesus on the cross, and then the power of his resurrection might mean for you, and for me, and for anyone open to it in the world today.

A few weeks ago, I covered the evidence for the resurrection—the factual history of Jesus being crucified, buried, and then the power of God's Spirit raising him from the dead, and all of the evidence around that in human history. And because of the truth of that, Christianity is still moving forward in the world today, and people's lives are being changed by the message of Jesus.

But Paul specifically prays that the power of the resurrection might work in our hearts today. It might work deeply within us and do some specific things in us. And that prayer is what I want to highlight today for you on this Easter Sunday—how the resurrection of Jesus can work in your life and change the way you live.

Paul prays specifically. He's thankful for all the people he's writing to because they've come to a knowledge of Jesus: *I do not cease to give thanks for you*. And that's the same with us here at Christian Crusaders.

Friends, we are so thankful for all our listeners out there, so many of you who have been supportive of this ministry over the years. We're so grateful for it and for your faith, and others that God is drawing to faith in Jesus through this ministry. And we do remember you in our prayers.

We pray often for our listeners, and our whole team does. And we pray, just as Paul did, that God would work in your lives—be revealing things to you, growing you, maturing you in your faith.

Paul says it this way: that the spirit of wisdom and revelation of knowledge of Jesus might be enlightened in your hearts so that you can... and then he says three things.

Number one: *know the hope to which he has called you*.

If the resurrection does anything for us, friends, Jesus coming out of the grave ought to stir in us this anticipation, this excitement, this positive, looking-forward bent in life—for the fact that God does some of his best work in the darkest hours. And he knows no limits, he knows no bounds. So there is always hope.

We might describe this hope in some ways as an unquenchable optimism—something that cannot be snuffed out. Peter described it as a *living hope*. It cannot be killed. It just stirs within us by the Spirit of God within us.

Now, this Spirit that was there when Jesus was raised from the dead comes into the heart of every believer the moment they believe on the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit is given us as a deposit, guaranteeing—this is what Jesus said before he ascended. It was better that he would leave after his resurrection so that he could send this helper, this comforter, the one who would guide us into all truth.

But the Scripture tells us that all of these words are meaningless. Christianity—this work of the Kingdom of God—is not a matter of talking, but it is a matter of power. And that's what we're talking about here: a power that can work in any situation—even in the grave, in the tomb where Jesus lay. This is not too far of a reach for the hand of Almighty God.

And whatever darkness we find ourselves in, whatever situation we find ourselves in this side of eternity, we can cling to the fact that there is nothing our God can't do. No doorways he can open. Nothing is impossible for him. And we can always hope in his future grace working in our lives in the here and now.

But friends, this hope is so much more than that.

Beyond the light and momentary trials that we'll feel this side of eternity, there is in us—when we come to believe in Jesus—an unquenchable optimism for what lies ahead. This is an anticipation of something

we can't even comprehend in our minds. This is evidence that a person has come to Christ and is being reborn and growing in Christ—that they're excited for what lies ahead in a way that cannot be described. It cannot be explained. But it just is.

I have been at the bedside of many people who are transferring from this life into the next. Some who deeply knew the Lord Jesus—the risen Christ, the one who was alive in them—and others who didn't. And I can tell you, I have been around some that were so excited about moving from this life into the next. They couldn't explain it, but they were just anticipating the glory and the beauty and the marvel and the wonder of what lied ahead.

And this is that supernatural hope—the glorious hope that he has called us to.

I remember one lady, month after month, saying, *I'm just ready to go. I'm so excited to go.* She understood from the Scriptures the hope of a redeemed body. She was 102 years old. She understood that the Scripture said, *no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind can conceive what God has prepared for those who love him.*

And all of this, friends—hope—is giving us assurance. It is proved valid because of the factual history of Jesus being resurrected from the dead.

And Paul is praying, and we are praying today—all of you that are hearing this—that you may *know the glorious hope to which God has called you.*

And then he says this: *and that you would know what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.*

This word *inheritance* is something that comes to us by nature of who we are. This is not something we earn. It's something we're born into.

Friends, not only are you born into a hope that God can work in your life in miraculous ways, this side of heaven, and a great hope that something better awaits us for all eternity beyond our comprehension—because of the work of Jesus, the forgiveness of our sins—then we are adopted into his eternal family, and you become either a son or a daughter of the Most High God.

I have two children. Both of those children—I have one son and one daughter—both of those children are written in my will. They're in my inheritance. I can't even think of something right now that they could do that would cause me to take them out of my inheritance. They've been born into my family. They're written into it. And should I pass on and move into eternity tomorrow, they will have—they, whatever they've done in this life—they will have that inheritance, the portion that I leave to them.

And you know what? God is the same. He is a loving heavenly Father. And if you've been adopted into his family, then he has some riches. I don't know what they are. The Bible gives imagery about the things that we'll experience in eternity, and this world is a foretaste.

The good things in this world are a foretaste of what lies ahead. But beyond the grave, we see it through the resurrection of Jesus. There is more. There is power beyond this life. There is something there. God has spoken it to us. His Spirit stirs us in it, and we don't have to earn it. If our sins are forgiven, we've opened our hearts to the gift of Jesus, there is a glorious inheritance that awaits his people for all eternity.

The fulfillment of our soul's deep satisfaction, deep meaning, deep purpose—all of this lies ahead because of the work of the resurrection.

Friends, we want you to walk in an excitement and enthusiasm about this. We pray that the eyes of your heart can be opened, that you will have a revelation and a knowledge and an understanding of these things—this glorious hope to which he's called you, the riches of the inheritance of the saints.

And then he says one more thing: that through the resurrection power of Jesus, you will understand the immeasurable greatness of his power that's available to you and I right now. The power within us is greater than any challenge that lies ahead of us. This power is described as the working of his great might within us, in the same way that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him right at his right hand.

Friends, this is the power that you and I were designed to run on.

No question about it—God is fuel for our lives. In him we live and move and have our being. Greater is he that is in us than anything that is in this world. Just as automobiles are designed often to run on gasoline or diesel or now electricity, electrical power—so you and I were made to run on the power of God.

And certainly, we can do life in our own strength, and we can maybe seemingly get along pretty well at different times in our lives. But when push comes to shove and we know we're facing eternity or some insurmountable task—friends, that's when people often cry out to God. But there's no reason to wait. You were designed to run on him from beginning to end.

We were created by him and created for him, and he has put a place deep within our soul that only he can fill. And the more that we allow him in there, the more you and I will have a leading of the Spirit. The Bible says a supernatural power working within us—this great might being exerted within us. And the Scripture says, when the Holy Spirit takes over a life, that life becomes, in a sense, unquenchable. That life then becomes eternally a light.

And this comes from God into us and then can start to work through us. And we can become, as Jesus described, like rivers of living water—with the pouring of God's Spirit through us.

Now, those are the three things that Paul prayed for that can be ours through the resurrection: the glorious hope that we can live with, the inheritance of the saints, and the power of Almighty God working in our lives.

But what I want to do here now—I've mentioned my kids earlier, my children as an inheritance and their inheritance of mine and their inheritance of my wife Chris's. And when the Bible talks about God coming into the world through Jesus, it is described as a time when a groom came to prepare his bride.

And when we're talking about the love of God, we're talking about God coming and wanting to create for himself a bride that he is eternally excited about, friend. And here's the truth of the matter: he wants you to be a part of that bride.

That is his inheritance. We are described as his inheritance for all eternity.

I love my wife, Chris. We are nurturing this marriage relationship, this side of eternity, so that we can continue to grow together and find meaning and purpose and joy together.

God wants to do the same thing with you and with me. He wants to nurture a relationship with us. He's drawing us into that relationship with his kindness and his gentleness, and he's asking us to respond by drawing closer to him.

And James said it this way: he said, *If we draw near to God, he will draw near to us.*

God wants to be your friend. He wants to be a groom to you, in a sense, and you be his bride, and there can be a flourishing of life between us. And as God operates in his people in the world, then God displays who he is to all the world around us.

But for this to happen, friends, you and I need to walk closer and closer with the Lord Jesus. And I can just tell you, as I talk about building a relationship with my wife—it takes time. It takes conversation. It takes energy. And when we put that in together, then we flourish together. We become stronger together. And then, as we operate more and more in a sense of oneness, then that multiplies the strength that we know from each other and also the ability for us to, in a unified way, have an impact in the world.

And it's the same with God, friends. The more time we spend with him, the more intimately we share with him. The more we open our hearts to him, the more we become intertwined. The more strength we share from him, the more power is infused in us. And this sense of teamwork, where we don't know exactly where we begin and he ends—and he's operating in and through us to bring about his good will and his good plan—then we have greater impact. We have a greater sense of wholeness, a greater sense of joy.

And we want that for you, friends—to know the glorious hope of your calling, his incomparably great power in your life, and have great confidence in the inheritance that lies ahead. Because Jesus is alive, and because he's alive, all these things are true—most assuredly true. And the evidence is all around us, in the lives of other people and in the lives of many who have gone before us.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you. Thank you for doing for us what we couldn't do for ourselves—for paying the penalty for our sin through the shedding of the blood of your Son, Jesus, and his death on the cross, so that we might be forgiven, be adopted into your eternal family, given a supernatural hope by your Spirit, having a confidence of a glorious inheritance that lies ahead, and being stirred inside by an unquenchable, unstoppable power.

Father, give us ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to believe in this supernatural work and this revelation of your word, so that we might walk in this supernatural way before you.

And Father, if anyone is listening that is thinking about inviting you into their hearts for the forgiveness of their sins, help them open their hearts to receive this gift of the salvation of their souls through Jesus—even now, by faith—as they're listening to this broadcast and hearing this worship of your Son.

We pray this in his matchless name, the name of Jesus. Amen.