

# Through Resurrection Power

by Zac Poonen

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*Christians are to walk upright in an upside down world, resisting the temptations of the world and following Jesus closely, and trusting in the power of resurrection to overcome sin and live a life pleasing to God.*

**Duration:** 59:56

**Scripture:** Ephesians 2:6

**Topics:** "Resurrection Power", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living upright in a world filled with sin and challenges. It highlights the need to imitate the faith and conduct of godly examples, focusing on the power of Christ's resurrection to overcome trials and crucifixions in life. The speaker encourages seeking genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit for true resurrection power and joy inexpressible.

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## Transcript

The last few days, Sundays rather, we were considering a statement that people in Thessalonica have said about the Apostle Paul and his team, that wherever he went, he turned the world upside down. That's written in Acts 17, and I was mentioning that it was not really turning the world upside down. It was turning the world right side up, because the world became upside down when Adam sinned.

That means God wanted man to walk erect, and when Adam sinned, he died, and he was upside down or flat on the ground thereafter, like dead people are. Dead people can't stand erect or walk upright. So in a world where everybody was dead, if few people stood up and started walking, it would look funny.

It would look odd. But that's how Christians are supposed to be. I never forget a picture I saw, a painting I saw of the people in Babylon, all on their faces worshiping the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, and how three young men were standing upright in the midst of a sea of people who are flat on the ground.

I've never forgotten it, and I said, Lord, that's how we should be as Christians. In a world where everybody is worshiping money and sex and power and position, they're all flat on their faces, there must be a few people who are upright and who say, I don't worship any of those things. Are you like that? That's how we should be.

So people who are flat on their faces will think that we are upside down, there's something wrong with us. There's nothing wrong with us, there's something wrong with them. But if we are also flat on our faces,

worshiping the gods of money and sex and power and position, then we're like them.

Then we're not going to be a testimony or a witness or a positive influence on the world. So when Jesus made statements like, I have overcome the world, be of good cheer, and John says in 1 John 5, that this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. The way Jesus overcame the world, we overcome the world, means that we don't bow down to all these attractions that are compelling us to bow down.

We say, no, I've overcome the world. I do not bow down to those things. Jesus was tempted with everything in the world, you know, at the age of 30, at the age of 30, after he had already overcome so many temptations, still the devil felt he could tempt him with the glory of the world.

Isn't that significant? That someone who had lived so perfectly for 30 years, the devil tempted him, showing him the glory of the world and say, I'll give all this to you if you bow down to me. So don't think that there's a stage you come in your life where the glory of the world will not tempt you. Like Mother Teresa once said, temptation is like fire.

Even if you're 100 years old, it can burn you. Absolutely true. Temptation is like fire.

Don't think you ever come to a stage where I say, oh, I'm okay now. I'll never get burned by anything. You can get burned by sex when you're 80 years old, if you have not been faithful in your earlier years.

You can be destroyed by the love of money at that age or seek for honor and position in the world or in the church. The things that the world seeks after, bows down to, we are to overcome. That's what it means to live upright in an upside down world and to live upright in a world that is bowing down to other gods and idols.

God created us to walk upright. And that's the meaning of the resurrection. Let me turn to Ephesians in chapter 2. Ephesians in chapter 2. It says here that, verse 1, you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

That's the condition of the whole world. And that was our condition before we were really born again. And if you are not really born again today, that is your condition.

Dead means flat on the ground. And in that condition, it says here, God, verse 4, because of his great love, even when we were dead, now think of a person who is flat dead, buried, raised us up with Christ, verse 6. Now here's a cemetery. You go into a cemetery and everyone there is underground.

Most of them have become skeletons. Some of them become dust. They're all dead.

In the midst of that, when you walk, you are different from all of them because you're walking. You're upright. That's the way a Christian is supposed to be.

The world is like a cemetery with a whole lot of people dead, dead because of sin, dead because of their love for things that are contrary to God, contrary to the nature of Christ. And the more we partake of the things that Christ would not partake of, the more we become dead and we are buried as a result of that death by sin. And that's why, to me, the most perfect definition of Christ is of sin.

Rather, the most perfect definition of sin is that which is unchristlike. The Bible says, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and the glory of God, we read in John 1, 14, was seen in Jesus Christ. So when it says all have sinned, the definition of sin in Romans 3, 23 is coming short of the glory of God.

That's sin. And the glory of God is seen in Christ. So anything which is unlike Christ is sin.

That's the Bible definition of sin. So anything in your life which you cannot do in fellowship with Jesus Christ is sin. Now, that's not the definition of sin for most people.

You know, in the world, there are people who have all types of definitions of sin. It's like in a school or in a college, people have got different understanding of mathematics. If you ask a kindergarten student what mathematics is, this is understanding of mathematics is 2 plus 2. You go to a little higher class, the understanding of mathematics is trigonometry.

You go to a higher class, it's calculus. You go to a PhD student in mathematics, he's talking about things which, I don't know, there must be something higher than that. But they're all talking about mathematics, but it's all different levels.

It's exactly like that with sin. Your understanding of sin depends on which class you're in. If you live in the kindergarten forever, your understanding of sin will be very low.

It will be pretty close to the world. You know, people in the world are like those who haven't even come to school. But the kindergarten student's knowledge is not very much above that of the world.

And when a Christian's understanding of sin is not much above the rest of the world, that's okay when he starts. But if it doesn't increase, he's not progressing. I mean, if your child's understanding of mathematics is only 2 plus 2, even after 10 years in school, I would suggest you change the school.

Or change the church or going to. Because that's not the way it should be. I wouldn't send my child to a school where they're 10 years, they learn 2 plus 2. What do you think of Christians who go and sit in churches where even after 20 years there, they've never been taught that getting angry is a sin? What sort of school is that? I mean, to me, that's one of the elementary things in the Christian life.

Getting offended is a sin. You never heard it? If you'd been here, you'd have heard it for 30 years. To get offended with what somebody said or somebody did, or somebody didn't say, or somebody didn't do, or somebody forgot to do.

You get offended or somebody called you a devil, you get offended. That's a kindergarten lesson to overcome that. I tell you honestly, there are other things which are more difficult.

Lust with the eyes is a little more difficult. Anger is actually a little more difficult. Love of money is a little more difficult.

There are many things seeking the honor of men to be free from that. Those are a little higher classes. Getting offended, that's one of the first things we've got to get rid of.

And there are husbands and wives who are married for years who still haven't got victory over getting offended. They don't realize that they are flat. Even if they are little up, it's just their head is up.

They're not upright. They're not walking upright. So what does it mean to walk upright in the midst of a world that is in sin? The only one thing that can help us is resurrection.

It says when we were dead, God raised us up. Do you know that even though Jesus said, destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days. He was referring to his body, meaning that you can kill his body.

I can raise it up in three days. And he also said in John chapter 10, I have power to lay down my life and I have power to raise it again. He had that power.

He had that ability. Just like he had the ability to call 72,000 angels from heaven to fight for him when he was being attacked by the Roman soldiers to be captured. But he didn't call them.

He didn't even call one angel. Even though he had the power to lay down his life and the power to take it up again, like he said in John 10, he used only one of those powers. He used the power to lay down his life.

Never use the power to raise it up again. That's why the Bible never says even once that Jesus raised himself up from the dead. It always says God raised him from the dead.

In other words, when people came to crucify him, he had the power to resist it or he had the power to give himself up. He said, you see Jesus of Nazareth, that's me. Let the others go, take me.

He used that power to give himself up. But once he died, he waited for the father to raise him up whenever he wanted. If it is after three days, three days.

If it's after 30 days, 30 days. That's up to the father. He left it in the father's hands to raise him up.

That is what we symbolize in baptism. In baptism, in proper baptism, you'll be standing on your feet and somebody dips you and he can't dip you if you resist it. If you keep resisting, he can't dip you.

You have to yield into the hands of the person who's baptizing you. And all that symbolism disappears with this invention of child baptism called christening. It's completely contrary to scripture.

In true baptism, it's a symbolism of death, burial and resurrection. I read in Romans 6, you have to submit to the person who baptizes you and he pushes you down and you yield. And the more quickly you yield, the sooner you can go down.

But then, do you know when you're on your feet like that in the water, you can't pull yourself up. Somebody else pulls you up. You yield to go down, but somebody else has to pull you up.

That's the meaning of death and resurrection. You, Jesus gave himself to die. God raised him up.

And it's exactly like that when we follow Jesus, that we come into situations in life where people want to crucify us. I don't mean physically. They want to crucify our reputation, our dignity, our rights, our self-life, whatever it is.

The world is full of people waiting to crucify others. But the child and everybody resists it. The world is full of people who resist it, who resist the fellow who's crucifying them and want to crucify the other person in return.

The world is like that. But in the midst of this dead world, there are Christians. True, I don't mean people who call themselves Christians.

More than 95% of them are not really Christians. But a small group, maybe 2% or 5%, who are really born again, even among believers. Most believers I've met are not really born again.

They just said some words and some mantra and they thought they were saved. But I don't see the evidences of Christ's life in them. But the true disciples of Jesus, they are walking different.

When people seek to crucify them, they believe that God is in control of the universe. Jesus believed that. The devil couldn't touch him till God's time came.

There were many times, it says in the Gospels, that people tried to kill Jesus, but they couldn't kill him. And the reason given, it doesn't say they didn't have an army or they didn't have another strong enough. Always the reason given is his hour had not yet come.

I mean, God's time for him had not come, that's all. Now, a true disciple of Jesus Christ follows so closely to Christ that he's in Christ's shadow, as it were. You know, like it says, our blessed is the one who dwells in the shadow of the Almighty.

To me, that picture in Psalm 91 is somebody walking towards the sun and I'm close behind him. I'm right in his shadow. I'm quite safe.

So here I see Jesus, the way he walked. I'm right behind him in his shadow and I'm perfectly safe. It's when you're not in his shadow that you have all types of problems.

But if you dwell in the shadow of the Almighty, he protects you, he provides for you. You know what it says there? You won't be afraid of the arrows that fly in the day or the plague that spreads at night. You won't be afraid of anything.

You're in the shadow, close behind Christ. Anyway, so if I'm following Jesus, I say, hey, God says that he's in control of everything. I want to show you a verse in Acts of the Apostles, chapter two, in this connection.

Because when you're in the shadow of Christ, what is true of Christ is true of you as well. But if you're far away from the Lord, then of course this is not true. When the Apostle Peter was speaking about the crucifixion of Christ, he says in verse 22, it's the first gospel sermon.

And you read here, men of Israel, listen to these words. Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed so many amidst, just as you yourself know. This man, now this is the verse I want you to see, verse 23.

This man was delivered over. Who delivered him over? We can say Judas Iscariot. We can say the priests and the Pharisees and all.

They handed them over to the Romans to crucify him. But here it says, this man was delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. That means millions of years before, God the Father had planned that these Pharisees should be against Christ.

And at the end of 33 and a half years, their rage would have increased to such an extent that they would want to kill him. And even the date of his death was determined. You know that Jesus died on what the Jews call their Passover day.

That doesn't mean, now you've got to understand this. The date of Christ's crucifixion was not fixed after the children of Israel left Egypt. You've got to understand it right.

The date of Christ's crucifixion was fixed before Adam was created. That Jesus should be crucified on a Thursday morning, be buried for three days and three nights and rise up on Sunday morning. That was fixed way before Adam was created.

And because that date was fixed, God said, okay, on that day, I will deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. So the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt was timed to fit in with the crucifixion of Christ, which is going to come 1500 years later. It was the predetermined plan of God.

And according to the foreknowledge of God, foreknowledge means that God can see things that are going to happen thousands of years later. It's just like, you know, you can see in a video. If somebody takes a home video of something that happened, you watch it.

You're not in the video, but you watch what other people are doing. God can see a video of something that's going to happen 2000 years from now. He's not part of it.

He just watches. He knows what people are going to do. He knows.

He knew everything about your birth and my birth and the day we would yield to Christ and every secret sin we would commit and everything we would do and all the good things we would do. He knew everything long, long before Adam was created. And it says, according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, he, Jesus was crucified.

And the father loves us. If you are a disciple of Jesus, you don't love everybody the same way. But if you're a disciple of Jesus, he loves you exactly the same way as you love Jesus.

See that verse, John 17, 23. I've often spoken about it, that the world may know that you love them as you love me. And I've spoken about it for years.

But I want to clarify what could possibly be a misunderstanding. Some of you who hear this may say, that's great. God loves me as he loved Jesus.

Hang on. Who did he say it to? He said it to people who had become his disciples, who had acknowledged him as Lord, who had surrendered everything to him. And I'd say 90% of born again believers are not like that.

So that verse does not apply to them. You've got to read who it's written for. You've got to, when you get a, when the postman's got a money order for 10,000 rupees, you've got to check whose name it is.

It may not be your name. That's great, 10,000 bucks. But it's not in your name, sorry.

God loves you as he loved Jesus. Who is it written for? Those who are disciples. Those who have made Jesus Lord of their life.

Those who've got no other ambition on earth. Peter, James, John, Matthew, Andrew. What ambition did they have in life? They had no ambition to make money and to live for themselves and enjoy the pleasure of the world.

Their only ambition was to live for Christ. To such people, Jesus says, the father loves you as you love me. Now, if you don't fulfill that condition and you just go and claim that promise, you'd be a thief, like going to rob the mailman of the money order, which is not in your name.

It doesn't work. He won't give it to you. And that's the reason some people try to claim promises, which are not meant for them.

The promise is not in their name. I tell you, the most wonderful thing in the world is to walk in the shadow of Christ, to follow him wholeheartedly, be a disciple. Because then, like that chorus says, you can sing every promise in the book is mine.

Every chapter, every verse, every line. All our blessings of his love divine, every promise in the book is mine. But not everybody can sing it.

But not everybody can claim it. But if we are disciples and say, Lord, I have no ambition in life except to do your will. I have no desire on earth except to please you.

If I do an earthly job, if I raise a family, everything is to please you. If I bring up children, it's for you. Everything is for you.

A lot of Indian parents raise up children. Listen, I'm speaking the truth. Because they want somebody to look after them in their old age.

I never raised my children for that. That would be a very selfish, self-centered reason. Are you raising your children so that they look after you when you are old? You're not a disciple of Christ.

You love yourself. And you expect your children, hey, now I'm old, you got to look after me. It's because you never lived for God.

You know, the Bible says in Isaiah 46, those who are disciples of Jesus Christ, he says in Isaiah 46, I think it's the fourth verse. The Lord told me that many times. I'm the one who brought you forth and I will look after you till your old age.

If you're a disciple of Jesus, I tell you, you don't need your children to look after you when you're old. God will take care of you one way or the other. A disciple of Christ is one who's not seeking his own, even in his children.

He's not seeking his own in anything. He's saying, Lord, I live only for one thing on earth, to do your will, to glorify you and to accomplish what you sent me on this earth for. Why did you bring me out of my mother's womb? Why did you allow me to be conceived in my mother's womb and to come out? Why did you give me these abilities and gifts and contacts? Why did you give me a house to live in? Why did you give me this? And why did you give me a job where I get such a salary? Everything, Lord, I recognize is that I might live for your glory.

And I'll tell you something, for such people, everything that will happen to you will be, like it says in verse 23, according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. You won't have a complaint against anybody. I see multitudes of Christians and Christian workers and preachers even complaining, so-and-so does this, so-and-so does that, so-and-so did this to me, so-and-so did that to me.

I heard one fellow who once told me, a pastor of a Pentecostal church told me, oh brother Zach, this neighbor did witchcraft on me and I was knocked out on bed for nine months. I said, what was Jesus doing all those nine months? He wasn't anywhere wrong. Amazing, a neighbor can do witchcraft on a man who claims to be a servant of God.

What type of God is, God is too small. It's not the God of the Bible, impossible. When you complain about others, what you're actually saying is, listen, the devil is in control of this world.

I'm not a wholehearted disciple of Jesus. So all types of things are happening to me, which are not according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. Well, brother, don't blame God.

Don't blame the devil, blame yourself. For not being a disciple of Christ, but being a first class hypocrite by claiming to be a disciple of Christ. I have no complaint against anybody.

In the whole world, I'll tell you honestly, I don't even have a complaint against people who took me to court for 10 years. It was one of the best things that happened to me. I have no complaint against the people who kicked me out of that church about 34 years ago.

I love them, bless them. It's one of the best things they ever did for me. You ask brother again, he'll tell you the same thing.

Honestly, things which happen according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, because we want to live for his glory. We don't want anything for ourselves. You have no complaint against anybody.

No, I don't even have a complaint against the people who cheated me of my money. Because they helped me to love money a little less. Was that a blessing or not? It certainly was for me anyway.

Because as I was praying to God, I remember once it happened to me, I got duped of a lot of money and the Lord said, didn't you pray the other day that you want to be free from the love of money? Well, here it is. Thank you, Lord. That's great.

You know, if your only aim in life is to become like Christ, nothing, absolutely nothing. It says even the hairs on your head are numbered. Everything will be according to the predetermined plan, foreknowledge of God.

That's why we don't complain when somebody tries to crucify us. Because we have faith that in that crucifixion, as I yield without fighting, without resisting, I say, this is the mighty hand of God. Maybe it's coming through Judas Iscariot.

Maybe it's coming through Annas or Caiaphas or Pilate or whatever their modern names are. They are crucifying me, but it is God. And I will not take out a sword like Peter to fight back.

And if somebody does want to fight back for me, I'll tell them, put your sword down. I've done that. When people tried to fight for me in some kind of way, I said, brethren, don't you do that in my name.

Do that for somebody else. You want to do that for me. I'm going to accept this is the mighty hand of God.

That's humbling me, humiliating me. I say, praise the Lord. I'm going to accept it.

I'm going to submit to this baptism. The spiritual baptism for the 10,000 times, because I know all the previous times God raised me up. God's going to raise me up again.

He will. If you submit, he'll raise you up. And imagine what happens in your life when you experience so many resurrections in different situations that people try to push you down.

God raised you up. You know, in the ministry, I've seen also, some of you are not in the ministry, so you don't understand this perhaps. But many people who are in Christian ministry say, oh, so-and-so is trying to suppress me.

He's not allowing me to have a ministry. I say, what do you mean so-and-so's not allowing you to have a ministry? You mean that guy is more powerful than Almighty God? Then your God is too small. The message I have for most Christians is your God is too small.

Somebody's trying to suppress your ministry and your God can't handle him. What other stupid God are you worshipping? That's not the God of the Bible. In my life, many people have tried to suppress me, have tried to destroy my ministry, destroy my reputation, destroy my family's reputation.

So I tell you, at the end of 50 years of being a believer, not one of them has succeeded. Impossible. Because I worship the God of the Bible.

That's supposed to be your God and you can have that testimony too. If you're surrendered, if you get close behind Jesus' shadow and stay there, you will walk upright in a world where everybody's fighting those who are trying to crucify them and trying to crucify them in return. You say, go ahead.

You seek me, here I am. Like Jesus said, go ahead. And you stop the people who take out their swords to fight for you and say, put your sword back.

And you will say like Jesus, the cup which my father has given me, shall I not drink it? The father? I thought Judas Iscariot. No, no, no. Judas Iscariot's only the postman.

The cup came from my father. Can you see that? Can you see that even when a Judas Iscariot is betraying you, the cup comes from the father. Judas Iscariot's only a mailman.

And if you take that cup, there'll be a resurrection in it. It's like getting a letter in a dirty, stinking envelope that fell in the muck and all that. And you open it out and there's a check for one lakh inside.

Boy, I'm glad I opened that envelope. So don't reject the envelope because it looks ugly and dirty and soiled. There's a resurrection in every crucifixion.

If only you would see that. You would gladly embrace every crucifixion that other people seek to make to you because it'll enable you to walk a little more upright in a crooked world. Resurrection, resurrection.

That's the most important message for the Christian. There was no such thing in the Old Testament. Elijah raised the dead, but that is not resurrection.

It's just the raising of the dead. Elisha raised the dead. It's not a resurrection.

Jesus raised the dead, even Lazarus. It was not a resurrection because those people died again. You can't say they conquered death.

They were raised from the dead, but then death conquered them again. There was only one person in the history of the human race who conquered death. That's called a resurrection, not just a raising from the dead.

More than that, a resurrection. And the Bible says in Ephesians chapter one that this was the greatest manifestation of God's power in this world till today. Now to the average person in the world, the greatest manifestation of God's power is in the creation of this universe.

God spoke a word and the worlds were created. That's fantastic power to speak one word, Genesis 1.1. The stars, planets, galaxies, millions of them in such a huge area called space all come into being. It wasn't a slow thing.

It was in a moment, Genesis 1.1. Everything was created. But when it comes to resurrection power, that's an even greater thing. It says in Ephesians 1 verse 19, the surpassing greatness of His power, the surpassing greatness of His power, which is given only to those of us who believe.

If you don't believe it, it's not for you. I mean, if you don't open that envelope, you won't experience it. If you don't open the envelope of being crucified, you'll never experience resurrection power.

But to those who believe, it's called the surpassing greatness of His power. Which power is that? The working of the strength of His might, which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Not in the creation of the world.

No, you look at the words used. Surpassing, greatness, power, working, strength, might. What a lot of words the Holy Spirit uses just to speak about the resurrection of Christ.

God raised Him from the dead. And that same God is my Father who's gonna lift me up when anybody crucifies me. And it's gonna enable me to walk upright in the world.

And I believe that one mark of those who've been raised from the dead, you know, resurrection always brings joy. Haven't you seen that? Whenever Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, what joy that was. They were gloomy and mourning.

And all of a sudden, they were excited. There was fullness of joy. When the widow of Nain's son was raised and the funeral procession was stopped by Jesus and the young man was raised from the dead.

There's joy. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, all that gloom disappeared. There was joy.

Even the stink disappeared from his body. And in the Old Testament too, when the woman whose son was raised by Elisha and Elijah, always joy. I believe joy is the mark of a man who's experiencing resurrection power.

Imagine if you, your son was dead and Jesus came to your house and raised him from the dead. Would you go around in the long face and say, oh, my son is dead, but he's got raised from the dead. No, you'd be so excited.

Your face would be full of joy. It'd be a celebration. And if there is no such celebration in your life, if there is no joy that's marked on your face, because you've got joy in your heart, I want to say to you, my brother and sister, you're not experiencing resurrection power.

And that's because your whole attitude to the problems you face is the attitude of the people in the world. Oh, people are treating me so badly. They're telling lies about me.

They're telling lies about my daughter and my son and this and that and the other. You've got to complain against this person and that person and the other person. And where's God? I don't know where he is, but the devil's pretty active all over the world.

Are you a Christian or a heathen? I tell you, most Christians behave as there is, there is no God in heaven. Or if there is a God, it's like Beal. You know what Elijah said in those prophets of Beal? Maybe he's sleeping.

Maybe he's gone to the toilet. Maybe he's gone somewhere. Your God, he's not around.

That's what Elijah made fun of them. But I tell you, when I look at the way many Christians live, it looks as if their God is Beal. Their God doesn't seem to be around to help them in any way.

He's not there to help them. Their lives are so gloomy. They're miserable.

They're miserable at home, miserable at work. They come to church. They're just as miserable as anywhere else.

There's no joy in their life. You speak to them, you don't find the joy of the Lord. That's why they're not strong.

But the Bible says the joy of the Lord is your strength. The person who is experiencing resurrection in his life because he's submitted to crucifixion will find continuous joy. It says, you know how the Bible describes this? Let me show it to you in 1 Peter.

See, Peter didn't write this episode, 1 Peter, when he was 32 years old. He wrote it when he was pretty close to 60, after having, or past 60, after he'd been persecuted for the Christian faith and suffered a lot for Christ's sake. Look what he says.

And it observed a lot of Christians in those days who were suffering for the Christian faith, much, much more than any of us have suffered for the Christian faith. I don't know if there's anybody here who suffered anything serious for being a Christian. These guys were suffering a lot in the first century.

I mean, we didn't get an increment in our job. We call that a suffering. It's all rubbish, mosquito bites.

These people were suffering with lions and tigers biting at them. And look what he tells them. In 1 Peter 1, he speaks about this resurrection.

This is the great theme of the apostles, the resurrection. He says in verse 3, the middle, you're born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I want to ask all of you who say you're born again.

Are you born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ? What is that living hope? That anytime anybody crucifies me, I'll be resurrected too. That's a living hope I have. I defy anybody in the world to crucify me without there being a resurrection.

I defy the devil himself. To crucify me and without there being a resurrection. In every time there'll be a resurrection.

Because I'm a disciple of Jesus. I'm walking in the shadow of the almighty. God loves me because he loved Jesus.

People can put me to death. I can't stop that and I won't stop it. But there'll be a resurrection.

God raised me from the dead spiritually. And that's a living hope. And then it says, verse 5, you're protected by the power of God through faith.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that you can be protected by the power of God through faith? There's protection behind the shadow of Jesus. The shadow of the almighty. There's protection.

You will not be afraid of the arrow that flies by day or the pestilence, the plague that walks at night. You'll tread upon the lion and the serpent. It's all in Psalm 91.

There's protected by the power of almighty God. Through faith. And in this, verse 6, you greatly rejoice.

You say that's probably because they're having an easy time. No, sir. You greatly rejoice even though, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.

That means you've gone through all types of problems in your life. Various trials, not just one or two. Because in those trials, your faith is being tested.

It's like, you know, you take gold to the goldsmith. The guy puts it in the fire to see if there are any alloys in it, whether it's just painted gold or a real one. And God allows us to go into the trials of life to see whether our faith is genuine.

I mean, if some neighbor tried to do witchcraft on me, and I couldn't overcome that, I'd thank my neighbor and say, thank you for showing me that my faith was not genuine. It was just a hoax. I didn't even know that.

We had a neighbor once next door to us who tried to do witchcraft on us. He got one of those witches to boil some pot there, and we'd see him every morning. And I thought this is it.

My children were all small. It was a great opportunity for me to call my children and say, hey, there's something wonderful happening here. I want to tell you, these guys are trying to do some witchcraft on us.

You see, they had a theory that if somebody was seriously sick, an old man was sick in that house many years ago, that if you get one of these witch doctors, they can transfer the sickness over the compound into the next house. So this guy was there week after week after week. So I called my children.

They were all small. I said, you know, just like there are fake creatures, there are fake witch doctors. Fake preachers are those who are not in touch with God.

And fake witch doctors are those who are not in touch with the devil. They're just making money. So I said if this guy was real, the devil would have told him, don't try it over this compound, try it over the other compound, over the other wall.

But this guy's trying it over us. He's a fake. And one day we find a pot in our compound thrown over.

He says, yeah, don't touch it. This is all, don't touch it. Baloney, rubbish.

Break it up and throw it away. Whose power is greater? Do you believe that the power of God is greater than anything that's in your hand? Protected by the power of God. You know, these are the little opportunities I had to teach my children faith.

You have many opportunities. If you take the opportunity, teach them faith. We remember when some demon possessed people would come to our house when we had the church there.

They'd say, oh brother, don't cast out demons inside the house. You've got small children there. I said, what do you mean? You mean God can't protect our children? We cast out demons right inside the house and the children got faith in it.

They're not. How can it be? How can we serve God and our children get punished for it? I tell you, most Christians, they don't have faith that God is so small. The devil is so huge.

My faith is the devil is so small. You're going to need a microscope to see and God is almighty. Protected by the power of God, even though we go through various trials and the proof of our faith in those trials is more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire.

And it goes on to say, finally, in verse eight, the last part, even though you don't see Christ personally, physically in all this, you believe in him and you greatly rejoice with joy, inexpressible and full of glory. When was the last time you could say, I have so much joy, I can't even express it. You know, that's how we're supposed to live all the time.

All the time, brother, sister, claim your inheritance. We're in a world which is full of murmuring, complaining, gossiping, backbiting people. We're going to walk upright with joy, inexpressible.

We got so much joy. I remember the first day those religious folk took me to court because I exposed their own doctrines. I remember I was the happiest person the court tempted.

I really was. I was supremely happy because Jesus said to me, I've been to court before you. Religious folk took me to court to look at my footsteps.

I saw his footsteps there. I was happy. You know, there's no trial or circumstance in life which can make you gloomy.

Joy, inexpressible all the time. Even if you have physical sickness, you know, all physical sickness is not from the devil. I don't have, I've not done research on this, but my assessment is that about 10% of sicknesses are from the devil.

And about 10% of sicknesses are because of wrong attitudes we have towards people. You know, worries and unforgiving attitudes and jealousies and bitternesses. That eliminates 20%.

The remaining 80% are because we are living in a world that is under a curse. And you can't escape it. You can't escape thorns poking your foot because it's part of the curse.

You can't escape perspiring in the heat. That's because of the curse. The Lord said to Adam, you're going to perspire.

You know, every time you perspire, remember, it's got nothing to do with sin. It's just got to do with living under a curse. And when people die, that's because of the curse too.

Thus you are and thus you will return. So a lot of sicknesses, if you catch the flu and someone else is getting, it's not because of sin. It's because we live in a world under the curse.

Believers die. Believers perspire. So we don't attribute everything to the devil.

I don't like to give the devil more credit than what he deserves. He does do about 10% of it. But most of it is because the world is under a curse.

God cursed it because Adam sinned. But in the midst of it, God gives us healing. I've experienced that many times in my body.

We believe that God gives us health and healing in the midst of this world if we want to live for him. So I believe it's right for us to ask for healing. It's perfectly right for us to ask for it.

But even in such a situation, even if it takes time, sometimes some sicknesses are not healed, there's still joy inexpressible. Inexpressible joy and thoughtful consideration. I'll never forget a brother whom I knew, a very godly brother.

He was a widow. I think he was in his 80s living alone and he was sick. So there was a young brother staying in his house looking after him.

He wasn't here in another country. And one day, this old man, the young brother was sleeping in the next room. This old man got up to go to the bathroom and he fell.

It was about three o'clock in the morning or something. He fell and broke his hand. And with that intense pain, he sat there waiting till 6 or 6.30 in the morning because he didn't want to disturb the sleep of that brother.

You know why? Because that man had walked with God for 40 years. That's Christianity. I'll never forget it.

When I heard it, I said, Lord, make me like that when I get old. Because I've seen some other old people grumpy and complaining and, you know, they're not doing it right. My daughter-in-law is not taking care of me.

They don't cook food properly for me. Some old mothers-in-law. I see them and say, Lord, please save me from this.

I got the same flesh. If I don't work out my salvation when I'm young, I'll end up like that. I want to end up like this other man.

Godly, sacred, considerate about others, even if I'm 100 years old. You know why? Because that man, he was a man who for years and years, he was a brother, by the way, who understood clearly the way of death to the flesh. He had lived that way, lived that way, lived that way.

Boy, I'm so thankful that in my life, I met a few people like this. Really godly people. And women.

Saintly. They became like that because they chose the way of crucifixion. They lived upright with terrific consideration for others in a world where everybody's selfish and thinking only about themselves.

You know, you can't be like that overnight. You can't say, well, I've lived a selfish life for 80 years. And all of a sudden, I'm going to become like, no.

You know, as we get older, we have less and less control over many things in our life. Just like people lose control over their bladder and other bodily functions. And they get older.

Some get sick and they can't control their bodily functions. In the same way, our mind also becomes weaker. By the time you get to 75, 80 and all, you won't be able to.

In many cases, they're not able to control everything that's in their mind. Everything in their heart comes out. Just like bodily functions come out without control.

Things in their heart and mind come out without their control. What's going to come out? What you've had in there for many years. So even if you don't do it for god, at least do it for the sake of your testimony when you're 80 years old.

That people don't discover in that day what was in your heart for 30, 40 years. There's a verse in the Bible that says in Hebrews in chapter 13. Hebrews 13 verse 7. Remember those who led you.

Who spoke the word of God to you. Think of them. Look at their example.

And imitate their faith. Verse 7. After you consider the result of their conduct. The message Bible says, take a good look at the way they live.

And let their faithfulness instruct you. As well as their truthfulness. So don't imitate anybody's faith who comes out of a preacher.

I don't. 99% of preachers I don't follow. I'll tell you honestly.

I don't want to preach like them. I don't want to live like them. I said that to the Lord many years ago.

I said I don't want to preach like them. I don't want to live like them. I don't want to imitate all these American preachers who run up and down the platform.

No. I want to talk like Jesus. I want to be like Jesus.

Imitate the faith of those in whom you have seen. The result of their conduct. You see a result.

I always say before I invite anyone to preach in this pulpit. I'd like to know how he lived. I'd like to know how he brought up his children.

Because you know the way we bring up our children is a pretty good test. Of how we have lived at home. See you and I don't know how we all live at home.

But our children know. If you've got a servant at home. I'd like to ask your servant.

And I'll get a pretty good indication of your Christianity. Yeah. And children who watch us day and night.

Noah's children all followed him because they saw the uprightness of their father. I'd like to know how a person brought up his family. And then the next thing I would like to see is something about the type of church he has built.

And something about the quality of life of his closest co-workers. Those are the things that show me what type of person that man is. I'm not talking about giftedness.

I'm not talking about whether his co-workers are gifted. But how they humble God-fearing people. So consider the result of their conduct and imitate their faith.

I don't, I'll tell you honestly. I don't follow most people. Most Christian, most Christian leaders.

Most Christian preachers. Because I don't find much in their conduct. The challenges.

And many Christians have gone astray. Because they're blindly followed this, that, and the other leader. Just because they saw he's a great preacher.

I couldn't care less if he's a great preacher. I'll tell you if the devil were to come into this pulpit. He'd preach better than any of us.

Because he's smart. He's the cleverest of all created beings. You think he can't preach a good Christian sermon? I would consider his conduct, his life.

What's his attitude to money? How has he brought up his children? What type of church has he built? What's his attitude to children, to little children? What's his attitude to young people? Does he know how to speak respectfully? These are the things I look for. And that's why we invite very few people to preach in this pulpit. That's the reason.

People call us exclusive. I say, yeah, we are exclusive. Call it what you like.

But when we find a good example, we go wholeheartedly for such people. But if you don't find a good example, it's fine. And there are very few, because Jesus said, few there be that find the way to life.

My dear brothers and sisters, the early apostles were always emphasizing the resurrection. I want to turn to verse 1 Corinthians 15. Chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians is a great chapter that talks about the resurrection.

And here is verse 15 onwards. No, verse 14 onwards. If Christ is not raised, our preaching is vain.

Your faith is vain. And in the message translation, it reads like this. Verse 14 onwards.

If there is no resurrection, then there is no living Christ. And face it, there's no resurrection for Christ. Then every, if there is no resurrection, there's no permanent conquering of death.

Then everything we have told you is smoke and mirrors. It's an American expression. You know what it means? In these magic shows, they suddenly have smoke.

And then all kinds of mirrors, which fool you to think that some lady was cut into two or some lady is floating in the air. Or it's all deception. And he says, all our preaching is that type of deception, smoke and mirrors, if there's no resurrection.

And everything you've believed is also smoke and mirrors. You stake your life upon. Not only that, we'd be guilty of telling you a string of bare-faced lies about God.

Everything depends on whether Christ was raised from the dead or not. Okay, one last verse, Philippians chapter 3. Philippians chapter 3, the Apostle Paul says, he wrote that this when he was around 63, 65 years of age. After having been a Christian for more than 30 years, he says, Philippians 3 verse 7 to 11 is a great passage.

He said, I count everything as rubbish. The middle of verse, end of verse 8, I count it all as rubbish that I may gain Christ and my great longing, verse 10. Listen, my great longing in life is not to raise people from the dead or plant more churches or write scripture.

My great longing is to know God more, to know Christ more and to know the power of his resurrection. You say, hey, Paul, haven't you already experienced that? I've experienced a lot of it. I want to experience more.

The power of his resurrection, different situations when people crucify me. I want to know the power of his resurrection. And of course, the fellowship of his suffering, which is being crucified by others.

He links it together. I want to know this being crucified by others while I'm alive so that I can experience the power of his resurrection in my life. And as I'm conformed to his death, verse 10, that means inwardly I die like Jesus did.

I will one day, verse 11, attain to that final resurrection from the dead when Christ comes again. Some of us just sit and say, yeah, I'm just going to be raised from the dead. That wasn't how Paul waited for attaining the resurrection from the dead.

He says in life situations today, I allow myself to be crucified and I experience that resurrection power of God through the Holy Spirit. The whole purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, was to bring this resurrection power. The power that Jesus said you'll receive when you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

This resurrection power. A lot of people who claim to be filled with the Spirit don't have any resurrection power. They're gloomy, grumbling, complaining.

Sunday morning they come and clap and shout and say hallelujah and praise the Lord and all that. And the rest of the week they're gloomy. What's that? It's a counterfeit.

It's a counterfeit baptism in the Holy Spirit that was rejected long ago. There is a genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit that brings the resurrection power of God and the joy of the Lord. Let's seek for it.

So that we can live upright in a crooked world. See if the Lord has spoken to you this day, brother, sister. Have some dealings with God right now.

Is your God too small? If God is not the God of the Bible. Well, you can make the God of the Bible your God today. And say, Lord, I want to follow you.

I want to live the way Jesus lived. Yielding to people crucifying him. Knowing that you will raise me from the dead every single time.

I want to know the power of your resurrection. The fellowship of your sufferings every day. Being conformed to your death every day.

So that I can attain to the resurrection from the dead. Thank you, Father, for this wonderful gospel. It's changed our lives and it'll change our lives even more in the days to come.

We thank you in Jesus' name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/mGL7-EAzUaw.mp4>  
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