

Series: Ephesians
Title: Power of His Resurrection
Text: Ephesians 1: 19-23
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This was the apostle Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers.

Ephesians 1: 17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know WHAT is the hope of his calling, and WHAT the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And WHAT is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

These three “whats” comprise the joy set before you and I who believe on Christ:

1) The hope of his calling—Christ in you is the hope of glory and glory is the hope of his calling. The chief end for which we hope is our eternal salvation into our inheritance to see our Redeemer face-to-face and live with him forever.

2) The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints—this includes God himself being glorified when he manifests before all powers and principalities his glory in perfecting and conforming each of his saints to Christ in the last day—God's inheritance in the saints.

3) The exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe—this includes the mighty power which he has already worked toward us who believe, the power he is now working toward us and the power he shall work toward us when he raises us up in the last day.

The more God enlightens the eyes of our understanding to behold this three-fold joy the more faith and assurance we will have that God has saved us and the more willing it will make us to lay down our lives and to suffer the loss of all we have for the cause of Christ and his gospel.

This was the joy set before Christ Jesus our Savior for which he served the Father during his earthly ministry.

Hebrews 12: 2:...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Did Christ live as though this world was his life? Was his affection set on things below when he served the Father in this earth? Absolutely not! His affection was set on things above. His affection was set on the joy of seeing God glorified before all and the joy of seeing all his brethren gathered round about the throne in glory. Therefore, Christ willingly suffered not only death, but the death of the cross, despising the shame. Now, Christ has entered that joy and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Two other men in scripture—though not as fully as Christ—also saw that joy. They saw it more fully than any other men in scripture. The first was Moses. God spoke with Moses face-to-face. He showed Moses his glory—his glory in showing mercy to whom he would show mercy. The second was the apostle Paul. Paul was called up into the third heaven. He saw things not lawful for him to utter.

Because both saw that joy more than any of their brethren, both were more willing than any of their brethren to be conformed to Christ's death. When Moses' brethren sinned,

Exodus 32: 31: And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32: Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

The joy of seeing God glorified and his brethren forgiven of their sins made Moses willing, if it were possible, for himself to be cut off in place of his brethren, like as Christ did in his death. Paul made a similar statement in

Romans 9: 3 when he said, "I could wish that myself were accursed—from Christ [that is, if from Christ it was appointed unto me to do so—I could wish myself accursed] for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

And Paul wanted to have his own eyes enlightened to know this joy even more than he already did.

Philippians 3: 10: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

So this is why Paul prayed the Ephesians might know this joy more fully, and why we want for God the Father to enlighten the eyes of our understanding to see more fully this joy set before us. "That we may know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." So having studied the first two "whats," today we will begin to focus on the third "what"—"what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe."

The exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe does not refer only to one thing. It includes every act of God toward his elect—beginning with God raising Christ from the grave and every act of grace and power until when he shall raise us from the grave into our final inheritance with Christ.

I have five things to show you that are included in the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe. But today we will just take the first thing.

Proposition: The exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe begins with the very act of God raising Christ from the dead and exalting him to the glory spoken of in our text.

Notice the language used to describe the power of God in Christ's resurrection and exaltation. When he calls the power of God to us "**the exceeding greatness of his power**" he is describing the power by which he raised Christ from the dead and exalted him in glory—**exceeding...greatness...of his power**. Then he says, "According to the **working of his mighty power**, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places." The margin says, "the might of his power."

Note: The power of Christ's resurrection is one thing vainly religious men cannot learn in the letter because truth is, we don't have words to convey the power of Christ's resurrection—there are no letters to convey it. It must be taught of God in the Spirit and can only be spiritual understood.

But what made the resurrection of Christ from the dead such an unparalleled act of God's power? There are several instances of resurrection in the scripture but the Holy Spirit does not use them to compare the exceeding greatness of his power to us. Why does the Holy Spirit describe Christ's resurrection and exaltation this way?

The measure of power by which Christ was raised has to do with how and why he died and for what reason he rose again. We have to measure the power of his resurrection by the power of his death. His death was like no other so his resurrection was like no other. For the same reason his death exceedingly surpassed all other deaths, the power of his resurrection exceedingly surpasses all other resurrections.

Title: Power of His Resurrection

Divisions: 1) The power of holy justice; 2) the power of God's faithfulness; 3) The power of grace and love.

I. FIRST, CHRIST'S DEATH WAS EXCEEDINGLY GREAT BY THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF THE POWER OF GOD'S HOLY JUSTICE. THEREFORE HIS RESURRECTION AND GLORIFICATION WAS IN THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF GOD'S HOLY JUSTICE.

Christ Made Sin

As Christ promised, when the time came, the spotless Lamb of God, had all the sin of all the elect of God from all ages of time laid on him and he bore our sins in his own body on the tree—**this is “the usward who believe.”**—his elect. When our sins were found on Christ, the exceeding great and mighty power of God's unyielding, unbending holy justice demanded his death.

I have reminded you repeatedly the “death OF the cross” was the “death ON the cross”—the second death, the worm that never dies, is the death our Substitute died while he was alive on the cross. The “pains of death”, the agonies of the second death which Christ bore for his people, are compared in the scripture to a woman's travail in child birth.

1 Thessalonians 5:3: For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

Illustration: Melinda's sudden, “Ouch!” That “Ouch” grew in intensity. Men, the closest thing we will ever experience to that travail is a kidney stone. Melinda handled her travail much better than I handled mine!

It was the inward sufferings of Christ, which are called "the travail of his soul," (Isa 53:11) Like the pangs of a woman in labor, they came upon him gradually. Four or five days before his death he said, "now is my soul troubled." (John 12:27) The night in which he was betrayed, when he came into the garden, “he began to be sore amazed and very heavy.” At length he breaks out, and says, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matthew 26:37-38) After some time his pains increased, and “being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood.” (Luke 22:44) But the sharpest pains were when on the cross he was forsaken by his God and Father. (Matthew 27:46)

The extremity and greatness of those death pains arose first, from the sins of his people. The filth and guilt of our sins were laid upon him—which must have been exceedingly great in power—the most extreme distress imaginable to his pure and holy mind.

They also were due to the wrath of God. It was from the curse of the law, which he sustained as the punishment for them: the exceeding great power of shame for sin, the exceeding great power of punishment both in his conscience feelings of the wrath of God, and in the strokes of divine justice, and the exceeding great power of the punishment of loss—being deprived of the divine presence of God his Father. These sorrows of soul may be called the pains or sorrows of death. These made up the death he bore on the cross. Christ said, "the sorrows of death compassed him about," (Ps 18:4) Darkness covered the whole earth for three hours.

But just before he gave up the Ghost and commended his Spirit to the Father, Christ said, “It is finished!” (John 19:30) God the Father heard his cry—because it was “the acceptable time.”

Isaiah 49: 8: Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

The Power of God's Satisfied Justice

God's anger, as a judge, was turned away from him because "he saw the travail of his soul, and was satisfied: by his knowledge his righteous servant justified many; for he bore their iniquities." (Is 53: 11) By his death, Christ "condemned sin in the flesh." (Romans 8: 3) His death struck the final death-blow to death—both for himself and for his people. Our Substitute being eternal, satisfied the exceeding greatness of the power of infinite justice for himself and for his people. Christ snapped the cords of death in two for himself and all his people and "destroyed him that had the POWER OF DEATH, that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2: 14) Therefore, after he gave up the Ghost and went into the grave—the "cords of death" could not hold him in the grave.

Acts 2:24: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Illustration: A bed too short, covers too narrow.

Application: Believer, we can stretch out on this bed and get plenty of needed rest. Christ "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1: 10) He took the stinger out of that old bee called death. Death is no longer a penalty of offended justice to us, nor shall we continue under the power of death but "Isa 26:19: Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

II. SECONDLY, IT WAS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF THE POWER OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS BY WHICH HE WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

Christ Faithfully Kept His Promise

God promised Christ that when finished the work of redemption, the Father would glorify him together with his human nature with that same glory he had with the Father before the foundation of the world. And Christ kept his promise to the Father.

- He finished the transgression
- He made an end of sins
- He made reconciliation for iniquity
- He brought in everlasting righteousness
- He sealed up the vision and prophecy and
- He anointed the most Holy. (Dan 9: 24) –Hebrews 10: 14: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Therefore Christ prayed, John 17: 4: I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world

God the Father Faithfully Kept His Promise

God the Father being satisfied, being just and the Justifier of usward who believe, with every perfection and attribute of God fully harmonized and glorified, in the exceeding greatness of the power of his faithfulness--**Ephesians 1: 20: he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21: Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23: Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

Application: Brethren, see in this how it was exceeding greatness of his power wrought to usward who believe!--**Ephesians 1: 20: he set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places**—at the same time--Ephesians 2: 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Colossians 2: 10: And ye are complete IN HIM, which is the HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER 11: In whom also ye ARE circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh BY THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST: 12: BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM,

When Christ was baptized—immersed—upon the cursed tree in the wrath and justice of God, the old man of each and every elect child of God was buried with him in that baptism.

Colossians 2: 12:...wherein ALSO ye ARE RISEN WITH HIM through THE FAITH OF THE OPERATION OF GOD, WHO HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD. 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath HE QUICKENED TOGETHER WITH HIM, HAVING FORGIVEN YOU ALL TRESPASSES; 14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15: And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

The more Paul saw this the more he desired to know it and the more he desired for his brethren to know it. This was that “power of his resurrection” which Christ desired to know more fully, that power that made Paul willing to be made conformable unto Christ’s death.

Colossians 2: 20: Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,...3:1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Romans 6: 1: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13: Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. 14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Application: Believer, try to grasp this as fully as you can, we are not in the flesh. Our old man of sin died when Christ died, is buried and God remembers him and our sins no more! We are alive unto God, risen with Christ! Therefore, yield no more to the lusts of this flesh: to its doubting that our sins are put away nor to its desire to be back under the bondage of the law nor to its doubting of God’s provision nor to its covetousness for things of this earth,

Instead, yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead! Let us give our members to be used of God as instruments of righteousness! Whatever we need to serve him, to get the gospel of his Son out to his lost sheep—Christ’s resurrection and glorification is our guarantee that our God shall supply all our need according to his riches in glory. He will do it by the same faithful operation whereby he raised us together with Christ! This is the “power of his resurrection” that will make us lay down our lives—to be made conformable unto his death—so that God be glorified and our brethren be saved!

III. THE THIRD POINT I DO NOT HAVE TO LABOR ON, FOR YOU ALREADY SEE IT PLAINLY, IT WAS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF THE POWER OF HIS GRACE AND LOVE THAT RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD.

Raised Again for our Justification

Romans 4: 25: Who was...raised again for our justification.

By raising Christ, God the Father testified to usward (for whom Christ died): that Christ was legally discharged, acquitted, and justified, and all his people in him that we might see fully that our sins have been atoned for, God has made us complete in Christ and God has forgiven us all our sins.

Raised to Be our Head

Furthermore, God has made Christ our Head in all things to us, his church, which is his body the fullness of him. By his resurrection from the dead God "declared Christ to be the Son of God with power." (Rom. 1:4.) Christ has all power and is filling all in all. God did this that we might believe and have a good hope in God that God shall do the same for us by the righteousness of our risen Christ Jesus

1 Peter 1:21: [It is by Christ that we] do believe in God, that RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, and GAVE HIM GLORY; THAT your faith and hope might be IN GOD.

Application: Sinner, when God enlightens your understanding to see what Isaiah saw then you will cry out for mercy. Isaiah said, “I saw...the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” He heard, “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone;” (Is 6: 1-5) Oh, that you might see Christ now, risen in great glory!

So you see, brethren, when Paul spoke of wanting to know the “power of his resurrection”—it is not simply the sheer power of God, it is the power of all the perfections of God working mightily in harmony! Christ died for a multitude no man can number, yet not even a multitude of graves no man can number could hold Christ in the grave because the power of the multitude of God’s perfections all glorified together in Christ’s sacrifice is the exceeding great and mighty power that IS ETERNAL LIFE—the power of his resurrection.

Brethren, we have eternal life! Oh, that we knew it more fully! Oh that we knew that none of our possessions are ours and none of them will profit us if we make them our lives. We shall never be the loser for laying down our lives. We only gain by using all that God has given us for the furtherance of his gospel and the provision of our brethren—by it God is glorified for we say we trust in the exceeding greatness of the mighty power of his holy justice, his faithfulness, his grace and his love, by using us he shall call out all his sheep, and so shall we all continue in his gospel together for all eternity! Our life is not in this world it is with Christ above. May God give us grace now to live our lives like we truly believe it!

Ephesians 6:10: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Amen!

