

Title: “Live Like You Have Died... and Risen”

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1 Cor. 15:32b-34

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Service Readings: Gen 45:3-15; 1 Cor. 15:21-26, 30-42; Luke 6:27-38

What would it mean to live today as though you had already passed through death and been risen into a new kind of life? This is what Paul calls the Corinthians to contemplate – and live out.

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

³²What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” ³³Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” ³⁴Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning.

What are you living for? You and I gather into this sanctuary week after week. Every Sunday we remind ourselves that we have come into the presence of Jesus here in this room. We recognize that he descends from heaven to meet us here and serve us – with his body and blood at his table. And we celebrate with each other the forgiveness that he offers through this sacrament. And together with all the saints in heaven we worship him in song and praise, for we know that he is our God and that through him the promise of our salvation is assured.

What about the rest of the week? What are you living for *those days*? Don’t tune me out just yet. I’m not simply asking if you are living like a Christian the rest of the week. I’m not asking about your devotional or prayer time and if you are spending “enough time” doing them, whatever that might mean. My sermon today is not about any of that. It’s not to make you feel guilty that you are doing or not doing something, or not doing something enough. That’s simply not the point I’m trying to make.

Instead, I’m asking about the lens in which you view the entirety of your life, both inside this sanctuary and outside of it. I’m asking about what you see when you look to your past, and when you live in the present, and when you contemplate the future. I’m asking about how you perceive *all of this*.

For Paul, the answer is that we perceive it through the lens of resurrection living. That means looking for and even finding God’s hand in every moment of our life. It’s knowing that because we have seen him act in our life in the past, we know that he continues to act in our life in the present, and that we can trust that he will continue to guide us in the future. This is resurrection living, and this is what Paul speaks about in his letter to the Corinthians. And I invite you to explore this topic in more depth with me this morning and see how Paul modeled this type of living. And then consider how we might apply these insights to our own lives.

Paul writes, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” This comes from Isaiah who wrote to God’s people in his own time. The prophet was warning his people that they had focused on earthly rewards and trusted in their own abilities. They had rejected God’s call for repentance and now faced his judgement. Paul uses this phrase in a slightly different way. His message is this: if Christ is not God, if he

did not receive the punishment for our sins on the cross, if he did not conquer death through his resurrection, then the Israelites from Isaiah's time were right: let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die, and after that, it's all over. But Christ *is God* and he *did* endure the judgement for our sins and he *did* overcome death. And more than that, through baptism God joins us to Christ and he places us in that same tomb, and he raises us from the dead. *We* have been resurrected through Christ and so our lives should reflect this reality. Our lives should be one of resurrected living.

This is what Paul was teaching. He was reminding this congregation of what Jesus had done for them, and imploring them to view their lives through this reality. He writes:

³⁰ Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹ I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!

For Paul, the promise of his salvation because of what Jesus did on the cross, was not just a "thing" to look forward to. It was not like anticipating a vacation, where you count the days until it is time to go. No, for Paul, the reality of Jesus' resurrection and the future promise that it secured was something that completely changed how he lived his life – each and every day. No longer did he fear death so he was free to live. And he did live! It was a life of constant proclamation of the gospel, of the promise of salvation that waits for all who believe. It was a life that had no room to consider any embarrassment that might follow because of his belief in this message. And it was a life that could endure the times of despair when he would hear of a brother or sister Christian martyred because of their faith. And it was a life that could accept that the physical punishment it endured for Jesus' sake was but momentary pain.

You see, for Paul, resurrection living was not about just getting to heaven, it was about living a life here on earth that enthusiastically pursued his true love: Jesus. Every day was spent drawing closer to him, learning more about him, and pouring this knowledge into others so that they could do the same. His life was one that prioritized this pursuit over and above all else: money, time, family.... everything.

And Paul lived this life in spectacular fashion. His life is a remarkable testimony to resurrection living. But don't think that his life was a distant, untouchable ideal. It is one that we can look to and adopt in our own contexts. Consider for a moment Sarah, a single mother of two children. She works a demanding job to keep the bills paid and food on the table. Many days, she felt exhausted, tempted to give in to cynicism, to just survive rather than truly live. But Sarah had something that changed everything: **resurrection hope**. She refused to see her life as one long battle to endure. Instead, she saw each day as a gift from God, a day to live with purpose and joy.

She made small but radical choices. Instead of holding onto bitterness toward her ex-husband, she forgave him and even prayed for him. Instead of letting fear of the future control her, she trusted that God would provide. Instead of drowning in stress, she chose gratitude—thanking God for daily bread, for laughter with her kids, for the chance to show them what faith looked like. People would ask, "How do you keep going with so much joy?" And she would smile and say, **"Because Jesus already won the battle. The hardest part—death—is already behind me. I'm just living the life He's given me."**

Now consider for a moment what it might look like for *you* to live in this reality. What would it mean for your daily life to be shaped by the same resurrection hope that shaped Paul's?

When we embrace the reality of what Jesus did for us, when we recognize it not just as a future reward but one that is ours to enjoy today, our lives can be reshaped in the way that we approach relationships,

priorities, work, family, and even hardships. It can give us courage, purpose, and joy to face each and every day. We can face the celebrations of our lives: the marriages, the births, the new vocations, with thankfulness to God for his blessings. But we can also face the struggles, pain, and discomfort with true joy because we know, that through Jesus this is only temporary.

This is resurrection living. It is living a life transformed by the reality that, in Christ, we have already passed through death and into new life. It means living with unshakable hope, knowing that nothing—neither suffering nor even death—can separate us from God’s love. It’s a life of boldness and purpose, where each day is an opportunity to reflect the grace, forgiveness, and eternal perspective that Christ has given us. In resurrection living, we no longer cling to the temporary things of this world but are free to love, serve, and trust God fully, knowing that our true home is with Him forever. So, how might your life look different if you truly lived as though the grave were already behind you?

Please pray with me.

Gracious Father, through the resurrection of Your Son, You have given us new life and an eternal hope. Teach us to live each day as though the grave is behind us and Your promises are before us. Fill us with boldness to love, serve, and proclaim Your truth, trusting that You are with us in every moment. Strengthen our faith, that our lives may reflect the power of Christ’s resurrection, to the glory of Your holy name.

Amen.