

He is risen * Romans 6

Easter Sunday * April 17, 2022 * Langford Community Church * Graham Gladstone

If I say 'He is risen,' do you know what to do?

He is risen! 'He is risen indeed!'

Now here's a question – what does that mean? What does it mean for us that Jesus is risen? What happened that first Easter is a miracle to end all miracles – what does it mean for us in our very unmiraculous live? How does the fact of Jesus' resurrection change how we think about life and death, the past, the present and the future, how we live our lives here two thousand years later?

Paul answers the question in a passage of Scripture that we skimmed over when we were doing faithBasics. So today, we are going to go back and revisit that passage so that we can see what Jesus' death and resurrection means for us as we trust in and follow Him.

So join me in Romans 6, Romans 6, starting in verse 1, going to verse 11, and I'm just going to read this whole thing to you and then we'll talk about what it all means.

So, Romans 6, starting in verse 1.

NIV Romans 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? [If we have been saved by faith and not by works, should we go on sinning so that the world can see just how gracious God is?]

2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--

7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

(Rom 6:1-11 NIV).

This is God's Word.

Now that's a densely packed paragraph. It's like a ball of string so tightly bound; you can see the threads overlapping and appearing here and there but it's all mixed together. So what I want to do is pull out four threads to highlight them for you this morning, four thoughts that make up what Paul is telling us here.

And I'll put it to you in one complete sentence –

Jesus is risen and so are we to live FOR Him now and WITH Him forever.

That's your outline this morning, that's what Paul is saying here. Jesus is risen and so are we to live FOR Him now and WITH Him forever. Let's unpack that one clause at a time.

So first, Jesus is risen.

Good Friday ends on something of a cliff-hanger, doesn't it? If this was Netflix, you'd want to jump into the next episode immediately to find out what happens, but the disciples who were there that Good Friday didn't have that luxury. Yes, Jesus HAD SAID that He would rise again, but Good Friday ends with the disciples laying Jesus out in the tomb and then sealing the door. For all they knew, that might have been the end of it. The Creed would go...

"Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, He was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell." That almost feels like it could be the end of the story, doesn't it?

It's not though, is it? What comes next?

On the third day, He rose again.

Jesus died to pay for OUR sins on Good Friday but then Easter Sunday, God brought Him back to life because He Himself was not guilty. He didn't deserve to die and so God raised Him from the dead. That's what Paul says in v. 4 - Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father. Most commentators agree that that means - 'through the glorious working of God's power,'¹ the Father breathed new life into the Son, the way He breathed life into Adam at the very beginning and Jesus came back to life. He triumphed over the grave.

Just imagine, there was a time when Jesus was laid out in the grave, and then early on Easter morning, God said, 'Rise' and He rose from the dead.

In doing that, He conquered death, once and for all. He triumphed over death so that death could no longer lay claim to us. Look at verse 9 - For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

Death was, at one time, the final frontier for human beings. Once you crossed that line, there was no coming back. But then Jesus came along, crossed the line and then came back to erase it all together. Jesus died to forgive our sin and then returned to life to free us from the power of death that our sin deserved. Jesus conquered death once and for all, so that not only does death have no hold over HIM, it has no hold over US either. That's why Paul says over in 1 Corinthians 15:55 -

55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 57 ... thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is risen.

But here's the thing. We are too.

Just look at Romans 6:1 –

1 ... Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Implicit in what Paul is saying here is the fact that when we turn from sin to trust in Jesus, we die to the ways of the world. Verse 2 – We died to sin. We don't often think about that because we're clearly still living, but coming to Jesus means that we have died a real spiritual death to the way that we used to live.

Paul expands on that in verse 6 – he writes - 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- (Rom 6:6 NIV).

From a spiritual point of view, when we trust in Jesus, we die to sin and self.

And not only that, but when we trust in Jesus and are baptised as a way to publically declare that trust, we are united with Him in His death. That's verse 3. 'Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?'

It's like Paul expects that this is a foundational reality that we should build our lives upon – 'don't you know' that this is what happened? When we come to Jesus, we are united with Him in His death...

And if we are united with Him in His death, then we are also united with Him in His resurrection. That's verse 4 –

4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

What's true for Jesus is true for us. Jesus died and was raised to life; we too die spiritually to sin, we are buried with Jesus in baptism and then we are raised again to new life.

Paul specifically says – 'we are buried with Him into death IN ORDER THAT... we too may live a new life.' We die to sin and are raised to life IN ORDER that we too may live a new life.

And notice, Paul is not talking about the future here. He's talking about the here and now and saying 'if you have trusted in Jesus, then you have been raised again to life.' Jesus is risen and so are we. We have died to sin, to self, to the old way of living, and God has brought us back to life, to live a brand new life, because of Jesus' forgiveness and resurrection from the dead. Think about that. If you have made it your life's goal to follow Jesus, then you have died to your old way of life and you are now living a brand new one, courtesy of the power of God. Jesus is risen and so are we.

Now, the question then becomes 'what are you doing with that new risen life?'

Are you living the way that you used to or are you living in a way that reflects the new reality of your risen life?

I read a few weeks ago a story about a couple in the States who ran an art program in a number of Michigan prisons.ⁱⁱ This couple got to know one of the inmates really well and they gave him an opportunity to display some of his art at a local art show. Later on, when his parole came up, this couple vouched for him and he was granted parole and given a new lease on life.

The question is – what would he do with that new lease on life? Go back to the way he used to live? Or live in the newness of life that he'd been given? As it turns out, the husband developed a rapid onset dementia and this former inmate moved in with the couple to become the husband's caregiver. He would read to him and take him for drives and clean him up after toileting accidents – this guy was clearly intent on living in this newness of life that he'd been given.

And that's how it works for us as believers too. Jesus is risen and so are we to live FOR HIM now.

We often think about resurrection as a future thing – and it is and we'll talk about that in a minute – but we who have trusted in Jesus have experienced a spiritual resurrection that means that our lives should now be oriented away from our old way of living and towards to the one who saved us.

That's why Paul says in verse 10 - The death he died, [the death Jesus died] he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Jesus' inner life pointed away from sin and to God – everything He did was for the benefit and glory of God the Father. In the same way, Paul says,

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:10-11 NIV).

Consider who you were and who you are now, and the lengths to which Jesus went to make the difference and say 'sin, I'm dead to you' and 'God, I live for you.'

That's why Paul asks those rhetorical questions that the beginning of chapter 6. 'Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?' Of course not. We should get on living the life of grace that God has given us. Jesus is risen and so are we to live FOR HIM now.

And if we are living for Him now, then we are going to live WITH HIM forever.

Jesus' resurrection doesn't just change the way we live now, it has implications for the future. Remember verse 9? Death no longer has any hold on Jesus and when we walk with Him, it has no hold on us either.

Paul says it twice in this passage –

Verse 5 - 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we *will* certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

And then again in verse 8 - 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we *will* also live with him.

Paul's talking about the future now – we WILL live with Him; future tense there. Because Jesus died and rose again, so too shall we when we trust in Him.

There will come a day when you and I will be laid out in the grave, and then God will say, 'Rise' and we will rise to never die again. We will rise into glorified bodies like the one Jesus had after Easter, unhindered by physical limitations the ways ours are now. Death has no hold on us and we will live with Christ forever.

This is why Jesus' resurrection is so important. We know that when we lose someone to death, the sting is there; it hurts to lose someone. And yet, as far as God is concerned, the sting of death is gone, because it no longer holds sway over us. Death is not eternal separation; it is, in the light of eternity, a momentary pause in the way we live and a transformation from one degree of glory (to the degree that you can call this glory) into the next.

If we have died with Christ, then we will live with Him.

Jesus is risen and so are we to live for Him now and with Him forever.

Let's take a minute to work that into our souls.

First, Jesus is risen.

Did you catch that? Jesus is risen. A guy was dead and then He was alive. This is not a fairy tale. This is not a Disney movie. This is a well attested historical reality – the Son of God died and rose from the dead. That means, objectively, that death cannot be the end. Death is not unconquered territory because Jesus has already plunged in and come back victorious. Jesus, our Saviour - is risen...

And so are we. You are not who you used to be. If you have taken hold of the benefits of Jesus' death – forgiveness of sin and newness of life – then you are not the same old person that you used to be. That old self was nailed to the cross and left there and you been raised to life and filled with the Spirit of God Himself. The same Spirit, the same glorious power that raised Christ from the dead, is now alive in you. That is objectively true.

So the question is – what are you doing with this newness of life? Living the way you used to, unchanged by the grace of God? Pursuing your own desires and purposes with no thought whatsoever to the good plans God has for you? Or are you seeking to make God's priorities your priorities? Living in a way that reflects His values and character? Live for Him now...

With the knowledge that you will live with Him forever. I know that we face trials in this life, but in Paul's mind, these are 'momentary light afflictions compared to the eternal weight of glory.' Romans 8:18, Paul says, 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Rom 8:18 NIV).

We will rise again in glorified bodies, never to die again, all because of God's love for us. Let that give you confidence and courage every step of the way.

Now I have officiated a lot of funerals in the last seven years, but in some ways, my grandma's was one of the easiest. I mean, in a sense, it was also on the hardest I'd ever done, but in a very real way, it was one of the easiest, because of Easter.

Because Jesus is risen, I know that death is not the end. Because of the way she lived, I know that my grandma had died to sin and was spiritually alive. There's no question in my mind what she was living for; her actions said loud and clear that she was living FOR Jesus and so there's no question in my mind that she will be living WITH Him for all eternity. When all those pieces come together, funerals are easy, because there's nothing but good news.

Live your life like that. Let the resurrection of Jesus motivate you to live for Him now, knowing that you have died to sin and come to life by God's power. And let it give you confidence and courage, knowing that you will live with the Lord forever.

Jesus is risen. So are you. So live for Him now and with Him forever.

ⁱ Cranfield, 304.

ⁱⁱ <https://magazine.atavist.com/the-caregivers-prison-art-michigan-love-dementia/>