



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
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## WE HAVE RESURRECTION POWER

Ephesians: Recognizing Who You Are in Christ  
*Ephesians 1:15-23*

What I want to do today is talk about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You could go in the Bible and you could look at historical stories of the resurrection. There are a number of them in the gospels; great stories. We could learn a lot that way. We could also look at theological passages, passages that are going to help us understand how the theology of the resurrection fits in with the theology of the rest of our understanding of God and who He is and who we are.

But today I am going to look at something different. I want to take you to a practical passage. A practical passage that asks the question, why is the resurrection important for me today? Why is it helpful for me in my own personal life? I want you to turn with me to Ephesians 1:15-23. Let's look at that passage together.

As you're opening up I want you to go straight to verses 19 and 20 because in verses 19 and 20 we have a passage that in particular looks at this idea of the resurrection. In verses 19 and 20 of Ephesians 1 it says this. This is the part about the resurrection then we're going to come back and look at in just a moment. Here we go. Verse 19 says, *and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead (it's resurrection power) and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

So that's where we're going, but before we go there I want to take you back to the beginning of the section of this passage so we can establish the context for it.

Back in verse 15 it reads this way: *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.*

As we look back at the historical background of this particular passage here's what we see. Paul was writing this letter from prison. He's writing this letter and three others and they're all going to be sent at the same time through the same mailman. The mailman's name is Tychicus and he's going to deliver all of these. It's Ephesians (that's the passage we're in here), Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Four books of the Bible that we have today were letters originally written to churches and then to one man, Philemon, and Paul is writing them all at the same time while he's in prison.

He's in a difficult situation. I'm sure he'd rather be travelling around the world, sharing the gospel with people. But he's in prison and when he's in prison he's praying for people. He says in verse 15, *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love*

*for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you. He's talking about praying for them.*

It's interesting to me that Paul has this ability to pray for other people when he himself is in prison. I think usually what happens at least in my life when I'm not doing too well or I got bad things happening, I'm saying, "Would you please pray for me." But I think Paul is like Erik. Erik's over there witnessing and serving the Lord while he's in the hospital and I think the same thing happens in Paul's life here. He's eager to pray for other people.

I think it's a good reminder for us because when we experience some kind of a problem in our lives we tend to be self-focused, thinking about ourselves. I think it's very appropriate for us in those times to be thinking about other people. When we can think about other people and be praying for them then I think good things happen. Paul is doing that in this passage and we see that in all of these letters. In fact Paul has just a whole attitude of prayer.

Look at Ephesians 3, two chapters later. In Ephesians 3:14-19 he continues his prayer. Notice two words you're going to see. *Love* and *power*; two words that we're going to talk a little bit more about today.

But as he continues in chapter 3:14 he says this: *For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power (that's that same resurrection power he's talking about in Ephesians 1 and this is Ephesians 3), together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Paul is a man of prayer and he has on his heart the people of God. I just love the way he prays for them because the same prayers that he's praying for them are prayers that we can accept for ourselves and appreciate.

If you want to jot down some cross-references, in Philippians 1:9-11 we have another prayer of Jesus. I'm not going to take time to read it now, but I would encourage you to read the prayers that Paul makes because each one of those prayers give us a sense of what God is doing in their lives and is an encouragement to us as we view Paul even praying for us as we read the scriptures. Another prayer in this same set of letters is in Colossians 1:9-12.

Now in the verses I already read to you in Ephesians 1:15-16 it doesn't tell us there what he prayed for, what he prayed about. It just says he's praying. There's some good application about that for our own lives, but let's look now and see what he's actually praying for.

In verse 17 it says, *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

He's asking for the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation*. Wisdom gives us the ability to see the big picture, revelation is understanding something new. He's saying *so that we may know him better*. This isn't just for non-believers.

If you're here today and you haven't accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you want this prayer for you. You want to know God better because as you get to know God better then you're going to want Him as your Savior in your own life.

But I want you to know this passage wasn't written to nonbelievers. The passage was written to Christians, people who'd already trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, people who had already made a commitment to God. Paul is praying that they would get to know God better.

I think we all need to get to know God better and understand who He is. How are we going to do that? How are we going to get to know Him better? I think daily life takes us into new pathways and we get to know God in a different way than we knew Him before.

I think some of us may know Him as Savior. Very important because He rescues us from our sin and puts us on a new path of life. He saved us, in essence, from another path and God has given us an understanding of Him as Savior.

Many of us know Him as the head of the church. Christ is the head of the church and so we know Him as the head of the church, the person who when we come together here as part of God's church then we can enjoy who He is and appreciate Him in a very practical way. That's who God is and as we understand Him as the head of our church.

But I don't think that's all we understand God as. I think we also want to come to get to know Him as the problem solver of our lives. As we experience problems in our daily lives we are integrating our spirituality and our faith into our daily lives. Am I experiencing a problem today? I'm going to go to God and get to know Him more as the problem solver in my life.

Or the God who helps us with anxiety that we struggle at times. Is He the God of anxiety in our lives, that He can come in and help us deal with the struggles that we face in those particular ways?

See, I think there's going to be two links here in the passage that we're looking at. One is getting to know God better and the other is the resurrection power that we experience. I believe the two are linked together. When we get to know God better then we get to experience the resurrection power that He wants us to experience. But first we have to get to know Him better. And often that means getting to know Him in new ways.

I think about in the Old Testament how God introduced Himself in new ways to different characters and they came to know Him differently. God's name in the Old Testament is Jehovah or Yahweh. The name Jehovah is used by itself a number of times, but occasionally it's put next to another word to describe God in a new way as someone came to understand God in a new way at that time.

For example, Abraham. Beautiful story. Abraham was given a promise that “through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed,” but he didn’t even have a child yet. So Abraham decided to take matters into his own hands and he had a child through his wife’s handmaid, Hagar. The baby’s name was Ishmael. But that wasn’t God’s design, that wasn’t God’s plan. That wasn’t the person that God provided, the baby that God provided.

Abraham needed to learn more about God as the provider. So in the course of his life Isaac was born and God says, “I’m going to test you, Abraham. I want you to take Isaac up and I want you to sacrifice him up on the mountain, Mount Moriah.” So Abraham, on his way up the mountain, is walking with his son and his son says to him, “Dad, we have the fire and we have the wood, but where’s the sacrifice?” And Abraham says rightly to his son, “The Lord will provide that, son.” The Bible tells us that Abraham believed that God would actually have him kill Isaac and that he would raise Isaac from the dead. But that’s not exactly what happened.

Abraham went up there and as he had the knife ready to kill his son, God through the angel said, “Stop.” There was a ram over in the thicket there and Abraham went over and took the ram and offered the ram as the sacrifice. He called the place Jehovah-Jireh, which means God is Provider. I think some of us need to know God better as Jehovah-Jireh, the God who is the provider for us.

There’s another story in the Bible about the Israelites when they escaped from Egypt. They knew God as Savior because He rescued them out. That’s what the Passover ceremony that we celebrated on Friday night is all about. They were rescued out of Egypt. But then they end up near the waters of Marah. Marah means bitter and the waters had a bitterness to them. So they were stuck. They couldn’t drink the water, so they complained and they grumbled to God.

But God wanted to reveal Himself to them in a new way. And so what happened was He brings them to this place and God says to Moses, “Throw this wood into the water,” and when he did the Bible says the water became sweet. God said to them, “If you obey me you won’t have all the diseases that the other nations have.” That day they learned about God as Jehovah-Rapha, God is Healer. I think sometimes we need to get to know God as Healer in our lives, get to know Him in a different way than we had known Him before.

One time the Israelites were fighting the Amalekites and in the battle there was a banner, a flag that moved forward. That day they called Him Jehovah-Nissi because *nissi* means banner. The banner is the encouragement as we’re moving forward and sometimes we just need to see that banner, the encouragement that God wants to provide. The God of Encouragement, Jehovah-Nissi.

Gideon’s another story. He’s the one who is rather nervous about God’s will and so he put the fleece out twice to determine whether God wanted him to do this or that. And sure enough God did and He demonstrated His power through the fleece situation. In that particular situation he got to know God as Jehovah-Shalom, the God of Peace.

In what way does God want you to know Him better today? I’m convinced that God is continually prompting us in new ways to get to know Him. We tend to put God in a box at times. We say, “I know God this way,” and God says, “I want you to understand me in a new way.”

And that's why when Paul prays this important prayer he says to them in verse 17, *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.* Praying for Christians that they may know God better. I want to know God better in my life.

There are two themes that we see in this passage. One is getting to know God better and the other is this resurrection power of God.

Look at verse 18; you'll see what I mean. Verse 18 says, *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.* I tend to think about the eyes of my mind so that I understand something new. But in this passage not just understanding something new inside of our minds, it's not understanding something in our hearts.

I know that some of you are praying for loved ones who you know are on a bad path. You know that they are not living for the Lord and you're praying that God would enlighten the eyes of their heart, that they'd recognize that their heart response to God is the most important thing, that they would give their heart to God. So you're praying, like Paul is, that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened so that they would get to know God in a particular way.

Let me read the rest of verse 18 because there are three things that Paul is praying that their eyes of their heart would be enlightened to see. *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you* (that's the first thing, hope), *the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people* (that's riches; so we have hope and riches), *and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*

When you have the eyes of your heart opened up there's this ah-ha moment that goes, "Wow. Wow. I didn't know that about God before." Or "Wow. God just revealed Himself in a new way to me." That's what happened during the resurrection with a number of people.

Do you remember Mary Magdalene? She was the first one that Jesus revealed Himself to after the resurrection. In the garden she was crying and while she was crying there in the garden, Jesus came up and she turned around and saw Him and said, "Rabbonai," which means teacher. But when she left Him and went back to the disciples she said, "I have seen the Lord." It went from Rabbonai (teacher) to the Lord. God revealed Himself in this new way. Mary Magdalene was changed in her whole life because now she had seen the Lord. She ran back and saw those very things Jesus had told the disciples about.

When I think about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the power of that resurrection, it's just such an unusual experience that someone be raised from the dead. It must've been shocking for Mary Magdalene. It reminds me of a joke that I want to tell you.

There were three men who were standing around talking and asking each other, "When they're at your funeral looking into the casket at you, what do you want people to say about you?" The first guy says, "When people look at me in the casket I want them to say, 'He was a great philanthropist. He gave back to people in his life.'" The second man said, "That's great. When people look at me in the casket I want them to say, 'He was a great family man and he really

invested in his family.” The third guy says, “That’s great. But when they look at me in the casket I want them to say, ‘Look! He’s moving!’”

I think it would be so shocking to experience the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For Mary Magdalene to see Jesus in that new way must have been stunning.

Thomas couldn’t even believe it. When Thomas heard that all of the disciples had been in that upper room with Jesus, he came in there and he just says, “I can’t believe that. It doesn’t even make sense to me. I can’t understand the resurrection and what it is.”

The next week when they were in the upper room Jesus had a personal encounter with Thomas. He says to Thomas, “Feel my hands. See the nail prints in my hands. See the spear scar on my side.” Thomas was amazed. “*My Lord and my God*, I see and I believe. And Jesus said, “*Blessed are those who believe even though they haven’t yet seen.*” What an amazing thing that must have been for Thomas to come into contact with the God who was raised from the dead.

I think about Peter. Peter was discouraged after the crucifixion of Jesus and so he went back to fishing. He hadn’t been back fishing for years. That’s where he was called from. You remember? Jesus went by the Sea of Galilee, “Come. Leave your fish and follow me. I’m going to make you fishers of men.” And so Peter and Andrew and James and John all left their nets and followed Jesus and became His disciples.

But after the crucifixion, what’s he going to do? Peter says, “I’m going fishing. Come on, guys.” And so he and the disciples all go back to fishing. They go out in the water and they’re fishing all night and they catch nothing. They get close to the shore and a man on the shore says, “Hey, you guys catching anything?” You know how it is when you walk by a fisherman. “You catching anything?” “No.”

The man on the shore says, “Put your nets on the other side of the boat.” They go, “Yeah right.” But they go ahead and put their nets on the other side of the boat and their nets were filled with fish, so many fish that their nets were starting to break. John says, “It’s the Lord.” Peter being the impetuous guy that he is just jumps out of the boat, swims, wades, whatever to get up on shore to get where he needs to be. He greets Jesus and then they bring all of this fish and the boat all the way to the shore. The Bible says there was a one hundred fifty-three fish in that net. Instantly one hundred fifty-three fish. What a miracle.

But Jesus asks Peter a question. He has an encounter with Peter that Peter needed, just the way that God has an encounter with each one of us just the way we need it. He says to Peter, *Do you love me more than these?* We don’t know what the “these” is, but I think that “these” was these fish that He’s talking about. “Peter, do you love me more than these fish that you’ve come back fishing now? Do you love me more than that?” Peter says, “Yes, I love you.” And what does Jesus say? “Come on, Peter. Tend my sheep. *Feed my lambs.*” In other words, build my church. Come on, let’s go forward. Let’s serve in the kingdom. And Peter did.



Peter needed that encounter. It changed his life. He became a disciple that communicated the gospel everywhere. Everywhere he went he told people about Jesus Christ and about how Jesus Christ had had a personal encounter with him.

Paul is praying that we would have the eyes of our heart opened so that we may know Him better. Know Him better. I think we each need to come to that personal encounter with God in a new way regularly. The passage is written to Christians.

Let me just suggest, if you're a young person today, maybe you have experienced God as some of the people in the Old Testament. The God of my fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. That's how God was referenced many times. Speaking of God as a heritage. That's really important. If you grew up in a Christian home, your parents are Christians, you have a gifted heritage. That's valuable and you want to embrace that.

But more importantly than your heritage is your personal identification with Jesus Christ, that you get to know Him personally as your own personal Savior. You continue to expand that knowledge of who He is and grow in what that all has to mean for you personally. I think we get to know God in different ways, in personal ways.

Let me give you an example in my own life to try to illustrate this idea. There are a lot of people who call me Dr. Turansky because that's my professional degree. So when I'm out in the professional world then I use that degree a lot. It gets me places. I really appreciate having a doctorate because people jump when I say I'm Dr. Turansky. So I use that a lot. But not here at our church. None of you call me Dr. Turansky. But some of you call me Pastor Turansky, or Pastor Scott is preferable, because it describes the relationship that we share together as a pastor here at Calvary Chapel.

But you know most of the time I prefer not to be called Pastor Scott. I prefer you to just call me Scott because that's my name. And that means you know me and that you know some of my idiosyncrasies. You're getting to know me better. I like that.

There are five people in the world who call me Dad. Two of them are here today. They're sitting in the back. That's Megan and Elizabeth. They call me Dad. Five people and some of my kids are married and so some of their kids call me Dad. But there are five people that call me Dad.

There are three that call me Pompy. You ever heard of the name Pompy before? I never heard that! But my grandchildren start calling me Pompy, I'm thinking, "Where did they get that?" I never met anyone named Pompy before! I have grown to love that term because my three grandchildren call me Pompy. It describes the relationship that we share today and I enjoy that so much.

There is one person who calls me Honey. That's my wife. It describes an intimate relationship that we enjoy and we share together.

See, the same thing is true with our God. There are people who know Him as God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. There are some that know Him by His name. His name is

Yahweh or Jehovah. There are some people that know Him that way in a personal way. There are some people also who know Him as Lord. Lord means boss. I have allowed Him to come into my life and control my life; and because He now controls my life, He is my Lord. But there are some who learn, as Jesus taught us, to call Him Father. That describes that intimate relationship that we can enjoy Him as a daddy. Abba Father.

It's precious to understand who God is and what He does for us in these practical terms, in these practical ways.

Notice in the next verses it talks about three words that He gives us when we're praying. *That the eyes of our heart would be enlightened so that we'll understand hope, riches, and power.* All three of those become important. Hope is a beautiful thing because that's what keeps us going. When we lose hope we find ourselves in despair. When we have hope we have a plan, we see we're part of God's plan. God is in control. We have something we can hope for. And we move forward. It's a beautiful thing when we understand the hope that God wants for us.

The second word is the word *riches*. Some people think when they hear the word riches of money because money can buy a lot of things. But that's not the riches we're talking about here. We're talking about the riches that come from relationship with God. The riches of His glorious inheritance with God's people; that's the riches he's speaking of in this passage.

But then he talks about the power, the resurrection power. Let's read a little bit more of that because in verse 19 he talks about and continues on to talk about that power by describing it as resurrection power. Listen to what he says.

He wants us to understand that *that power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

When we think of power we sometimes think of control. Because many of us like to be in control. When we're in control then we feel more safe, so sometimes we control others and we try to control our situations. But he's not talking about power. In fact I would say God would say, "That's not exactly what I'm speaking about here when I speak about power."

Have you ever tried listening to someone explain something they're really excited about? They just kind of go on and on talking about it over and over again. They're completely amazed at it. That's what Paul is doing here. Somebody might say, "It was great. Wasn't that awesome? It was incredible, amazing, stupendous, unbelievable." We kind of pile up words one on top of another. Well, that's what Paul is doing in verse 19.

He uses four words for power all in the same passage. We don't catch all of that in the translation, so let me point it out to you. Four words describing power. The first one is *dunamis*; that power for us who believe that's incomparably great. Power. Then *energo*, which means



energy. That's where we get our word energy in English. Is like that working, he says. That's that word there, *kratos*, which is in the word like 'democratic' has to do with working. That's what the word there, *ischus*, is strength. So four different words for power he's piling up there.

The power of God, he says, is the same power that we can enjoy in our lives. That same power did four different things. One is it *raised Christ from the dead*. Secondly, it *seated Him at the right hand of the heavenly realms*. Thirdly, it *placed everything under His feet*. And fourthly, it *appointed Him to be head of the church*. That's pretty big power. It's like quadraphonic power that he's talking about here.

But the most important word is that word, look in verse 19, it's the word *us*. He says that power is available to us. Wow. I don't even know what that means. What is God talking about? That the resurrection power is available to me? What does that power do for me? What does it mean that God makes that power available for me in my life?

I think one of the things that it does is it gives us the power to live a new life. Imagine that you live in an apartment complex and the landlord is really mean and he comes and pounds on your door and demands exorbitant rent and when you don't pay he loans you at a fearful rate of interest. He pounds on your door and comes in and messes things up in your house and charges you the bill for that. It's just a miserable place to live.

Then one day your whole apartment complex is bought over by someone new. That new landowner, that new landlord comes in and says, "Hey look. You can live here for free. If you have any problems just let me know. I'm going to live here too. I'm going to live in the manager's apartment here. If you have any problems you come and see me. I'll take care of them." What would happen? You'd have this whole new experience. Ah man, this is great.

But the next day the old landlord comes in and bangs on your door demanding a high rate of rent again, calling you names, being mean to you. What would you do? Would you say, "Here's the rent." No, you wouldn't pay him the rent. Would you punch him the nose? No, you wouldn't do it. He's bigger than you. What you'd say is, "Go see the other landlord. I'm not under your power anymore."

See, God comes in and He changes our lives. We're not under the condemnation or the guilt of Satan anymore. We have new power to live a new life. God gives us that opportunity. It's a beautiful thing that God wants for us. He offers that power. It's power for us.

Do you know what that looks like in practical terms? I'm not sure I fully do. I think I need to get to know God better so that I experience the power of God more in my life. I think that's what Paul believed for the Ephesians. Yes, they're believers, but I think he's praying, "God, I pray that you open their eyes up so they'll be able to see that incomparably great power for us who believe."

I think that there's a root inside of us that prevents us from experiencing that power. And that's the fear. What's God going to do? If I give my life over to God what's He going to do? Is He

going to send me to Africa? Africa really isn't a bad place. But some people are afraid that God might send them there. Or turn them into a fanatic or a radical or something. That they might be embarrassed or look foolish.

I want you to know that when God comes into your life He changes your life completely. He gives you a new life. John 10:10 tells us that He gives us life **abundantly**. He gives us a new way of seeing life, a new way of experiencing life. It's power that He's giving to us. You don't have to be afraid of what God might do inside of us. Yes, He will change you. And maybe you do need to be afraid because maybe He will change you in some ways that might scare you to death. But I want you to know that God has a beautiful plan and when we embrace that plan great things happen.

When Jesus was being ascended up into heaven He said to His disciples, "I've got a message I want you to share with the whole world." But He doesn't say go out and share it. What He says to them is, "Go back to Jerusalem and wait till you receive the power. Because when you receive the power then you'll be able to share the message."

I want to encourage you today to think about your own relationship with God. If you're here today and you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior I want to invite you to do that. It's an opportunity for you to accept Him in your life. He will transform your life. He'll give you a power that you need.

If you're here today and you've accepted the Lord, you're living the Christian life, I want you to pray like I pray that God would open the eyes of my heart so that I can know Him better. And when I know Him better that I might experience that power to a greater extent in my own life.

The resurrection power of God is a practical thing available for us every day of our lives. We just need to tap into it. Sometimes that means getting out of the way or presenting ourselves in a way that God can allow that power to flow into our hearts. It's a gift. I invite you to receive that gift today.