

The Power to Conquer Sin and Death

The Stepping Stone of the Resurrection

By Steve Pruitt

Smith Wigglesworth was an evangelist in the late 1800's and early 1900's. He was born in England and though he traveled to other parts of the world, the majority of his ministry was performed in his homeland. Wigglesworth was known for his great faith to believe God for miracles. In Frodsham's book *Smith Wigglesworth: Apostle of Faith*, he tells of Wigglesworth believing God for financial miracles as well as healing miracles.

On one occasion Wigglesworth was asked to visit a woman who was dying. When he arrived the woman was almost dead. The doctors had done all they could and had given up hope that she would ever recover. Wigglesworth went into the room where she was laying on her bed. He began to rebuke the disease and command it to leave her body. As he was doing this the woman died. A person assisting the woman was there to witness that she had indeed died.

Wigglesworth, not willing to give up, raised the woman from the bed and held her up in a corner of the room. He then commanded her to walk in the name of Jesus. The woman regained consciousness and walked. She later testified that she did die and shared what she saw during the time she was dead.

The power to raise this woman from the dead was made possible by the resurrection of the Son of God. The Apostle Paul witnessed this power first hand and understood that to know the power of Christ's resurrection was worth giving up everything that he had achieved. He writes in Philippians 3:10 *...that I may know Him and **the power of His resurrection**, and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death...* The Amplified Bible reads this way; *...And that in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers]...* The power that the resurrection of Christ exerts over believers is a stepping stone that Christians need to use in their climb to spiritual maturity.

One power the resurrection of Christ exerts over believers is the power to resurrect a dead spirit. Everyone other than Jesus was born with a sin nature. Paul lays out for us the doctrine of original sin in his letter to the Romans.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned —

Roman 5:12

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Roman 3:23

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit; The poison of asps is under their lips; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Roman 3:9-18

Because all sinned in Adam, death reigned over all. All were dead in trespasses and sin (Colossians 2:13) because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). The only way for anyone to have life was for death to be eradicated. This is what Jesus

accomplished in his resurrection. Jesus cleansed us of sin by the shedding of his blood in death, but he took care of our spiritual dead state by conquering death in his resurrection. Paul wrote to the Colossians, *And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made **alive together with Him**, having forgiven you all trespasses...* (Colossians 2:13)

Without Christ's resurrection we would still be dead in our sins. Paul wrote in Romans 4:25, speaking of Jesus *...who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification*. In arguing with some of the Corinthian teachers about the raising of the dead Paul said, *And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!* (1 Corinthians 15:17)

According to Paul had Jesus not been raised from the dead his death would have been meaningless. Had there been no resurrection our sins could not have been forgiven. It took both the death and resurrection of Christ to eradicate our sin and the death which reigned over us because of sin. Christ's resurrection paved the way for his spirit to live in us giving life to our spirit. Because he lives we live. Christ himself said, *I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.* (John 11:25)

The second power that Christ's resurrection exerts over the believer is the power to walk according to the Spirit. I have heard people say, "The Christian life is too hard to live, I can't do it." I have even said it myself, but who says I have to do it by myself? I can no more live the Christian life in my own strength than I could have given myself life to begin with. I was given life by the resurrection power of Christ and I can only continue to live by that same power.

The same power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that is available to overcome sin and walk according to Spirit. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection that we can reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. Paul said it this way;

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:8-11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Roman 8:11-14

The Spirit dwelling in us has the power to grow us up into the full measure of Christ. The Spirit lives in us only by the power of the resurrection of Jesus. Christians who desire to climb the mountain of spiritual maturity must activate the power of Christ's resurrection to overcome sin. To say that we cannot overcome sin is to say the power of Christ's resurrection is weak and insufficient.

We activate the power of Christ's resurrection by reckoning ourselves dead to sin and realizing that our life is hidden in Christ (Colossians 3:3). The Greek word for reckon in Romans 6:11 means; to take inventory, estimate, conclude, or take account. Each time sin raises its ugly head we should add it to the inventory of sins we are dead to and look for God's way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). And though it is a fight at times, we have proof that victory is possible because Jesus was raised from the dead.

The third power the resurrection of Christ exerts over a believer is the power to raise a dead and dying body to life. Even before his death and resurrection Jesus used his resurrection power to bring to life physically dead people. In Luke 7 is recorded the raising to life of the dead son of the widow in Nain. The Apostle John records in chapter eleven of his gospel the story of Jesus raising to life a friend of his named Lazarus. And in Mark 5 the account is given of Jesus raising a little girl from the dead. This power to raise the dead in these instances is the same power Christ will exert when he returns at the end of the age.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

1 Corinthians 15:42

...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:52-53

The reason the apostle Paul wanted to intimately know the power of Jesus' resurrection was so that he could experience the full measure of Christ to a mature Christian. He wanted to experience a spiritual resurrection while still in his mortal body so that one day he would experience the resurrection from the dead to eternal life (Philippians 3:11).

Billions of dollars and hours are spent every year by people who are trying to change their bodies. Just think how much the condition of our world would change if that time and money were spent on changing the person's spirit. We are not going to be judged according to our measurements but according to the condition of our spirit. A mature Christian spends more time on his spiritual condition than on his physical condition. This flesh will pass away, but the spirit is eternal.

Paul wrote to Timothy, *For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.* (1Timothy 4:8) The apostle was not suggesting that we shouldn't take care of our bodies. We must be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us. However, vanity is not pleasing to God either. The good news is that because of the resurrection of Christ we are going to get a new body one day. The older I get the more I realize that this present model is wearing out. I don't know about you, but when I look in the mirror everything in me cries "Come quickly Lord Jesus."

Ask God to challenge you in the areas of your life that you have not fully given to Him. Ask him to give you grace to activate the power of Christ's' resurrection to bring you to a mature Christian. Ask the Holy Spirit to increase the power of Christ's' resurrection in your life so that you can grow to the full measure of Christ.