

Christ's Resurrection and Our New Life

Ezekiel 36:26-27 and Romans 6:1-14

Introduction

We continue our short series of meditating on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I remember the film *Hunger Games* wherein the key characters are inside a big dome, and when someone dies, there will be a great sound. And in the sky, there will appear the face of the person who died.

And I just thought, “Bakit hindi na lang gano’n ginawa ng Diyos?” Bakit hindi na lang nangyari eh, no’ng namatay si Cristo—after all the darkness and earthquake, etc.—nag-pakita na lang ng sign si God sa sky (e.g., rainbow after the Flood). A notice in the sky: “The sacrifice is accepted... Jesus has died. I am satisfied.”

Well, the most straight answer to why it didn’t happen that way is the wisdom of God. As he himself said, “*My thoughts are higher than your thoughts. My ways are higher than your ways*” (Isa. 55:8-9). The resurrection of Christ does not merely demonstrate the power of God, but also his wisdom in carrying out his plan of salvation. Because in his resurrection, Christ did not only confirm the satisfaction of God’s justice (i.e., last week’s sermon), but he also obtained the rewards that he shall apply to us—to all sinners whom he represented.

Last week, we looked at Isaiah 53:10-11. Puntahan po ulit natin do’n, and let’s briefly look at verse 12 (READ).

- “*I will divide him [Servant]*” (I will allot him a portion)
- “*he shall divide the spoil*” - Term commonly used during war. Once you win the battle, you bring him the spoils (i.e., mga nasamsam/nakuha mula do’n sa natalo mo)

This points to Christ, and this tells us that Christ also obtained the rewards of his complete sacrifice and victory over death. And by his exaltation, Christ is now able by his Spirit to give and apply those benefits to us.

Ano ba 'tong reward na binibigay sa'tin ni Cristo bilang resulta ng Kanyang pagkabuhay muli?

Simply put: **Newness of life**. Bagong buhay.

Proposition: Because of our union with Christ, who died and rose again on our behalf, we are now therefore dead to sin and raised up to a new life.

Ito rin po 'yong tinuturo sa'tin ng Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 17, Question 45. *"How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?"* We're now in the second answer, *"by his power we too are already now resurrected to a new life."*

Friends, the resurrection of Christ is not just a historical fact in the past that we must believe. It is something that is **meant for us to experience**. And is not just something that we will experience in the future (i.e., sermon next Sunday). It is a reality that **we experience right now**.

Sermon points:

1. Our union with Christ in his death and resurrection
2. The demonstration of such union in our present lives

Let's go to Romans 6.

Sermon Point 1: Our Union with Christ in his Death and Resurrection

CONTEXT: Here, Paul begins with a question: *"Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?"* In the previous chapters, Paul has been declaring the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. And in chapter 5, he ends with the truth that even if sin increased, God's grace still overcomes it. That's how great his salvation is.

At dahil dito, may mga tao na ang naging thinking, "Ah, mas higit naman pala ang grasya ng Diyos para sa mga kasalanan natin. Eh di gawa na lang tayo nang gawa ng kasalanan, para mas lumago pa 'yong biyaya ng Diyos?"

That's the argument that Paul corrects here in chapter 6. He answers, *"By no means!"* **To continue living in sin is NOT the result of God's abundant grace for us.** Because we have been united with Christ and therefore share the benefits of his death and resurrection.

Many things to look at in this passage (i.e., many “For” and “If”), but throughout the passage, Paul speaks primarily of **the believer’s union with Christ—plus its effects**. And that’s what we will meditate upon.

In verse 3, Paul said, *“Do you now know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”*

- Baptism — Outward symbol of an inward, spiritual conversion, wherein the person becomes part of Christ and his body. Administered to converts who were joining the church. Hence, *“baptized”* here refers to *“united to”* Christ.
- Paul is like saying, *“Are you not aware that if we have become believers... if the Spirit dwells in us so that we **have been** regenerated, converted and united into Christ—we **were** actually united to his death?”*
- In short, **we died when Christ died.**
 - Verse 6a - *“... our old self was crucified with Christ...”*
 - Verse 8a - *“... we have died with Christ...”*
 - In fact, verse 4a - *“Therefore we were buried with him...”*

Now, a good question would be, **“How was it possible?”** Nandito tayo, buhay tayo. Hindi naman tayo pinako sa krus. How can we say that “we died and were buried with Christ” 2000 years ago?

That’s because we were united with Christ. Theologians would call this the **spiritual and mystical union**. The Bible speaks of such union in many ways. (Vine and branches; Cornerstone and building; husband and wife). But it remains a mystery as Paul says in Ephesians 5.

Nevertheless, Scriptures show us that believers have been **in union with Christ** because in God’s redemptive plan even before the foundation of the world, Christ was appointed to be the federal head and representative of God’s people.

For instance, let’s look at Ephesians 1.

- Verse 3 — *“... who has blessed us **in Christ**”*
- Verse 4 — *“... he chose us **in him [Christ]** before the foundation of the world...”*
- Verse 5 — *“In love he predestined us for adoption... **through Jesus Christ**”*

So ‘yong ating pagiging “united” kay Cristo ay hindi po nagsimula lang the moment na tayo’y sumampalataya sa Kanya. (Yes, now that we are Christians, we are united with Christ through faith, by the indwelling Spirit). Kaya tayo sumampalataya kay Cristo at nakatanggap ng lahat ng biyaya ng kaligtasan ay dahil sa simula pa lang, tayo’y ipinag-kaisa na ng Diyos kay Cristo.

We call this the **objective realization of our union in Christ**. (Objective, meaning without any influence or participation from us, without any respect to our experience)

Christ is the **head and representative** of all of his people, the true believers, the church. And he became like us as a true human. At no’ng si Cristo ay nagdusa, namatay, at nabuhay muli—ginawa Niya lahat ‘yon *on our behalf*. Hence, in the objective sense, **we were crucified with him, we died with him, we rose from the dead in him, and were seated in heavenly places with him**.

Christ already did it as our substitute, and all the blessings of his saving work lie ready for all true believers. Wala na tayong kailangang idagdag pa do’n sa ginawa Niya at nakamit Niya para sa’tin.

But it doesn’t end there.

Christ did not only merit salvation for us and possessed all the benefits of his finished work. Upon his glorification, he also makes his people to **actually possess** those blessings. Ito naman ‘yong tinatawag natin na “**subjective realization of our union with Christ**”, at ito’y sa pamamagitan ng pagkilos ng Banal na Espiritu.

(Subjective, meaning we are now involved in it, we now experience it as an *actual reality* through the work of the Spirit in us).

Look at Romans 6:6.

- Not just that we were crucified with Christ. The Spirit also makes it our reality.
- “... *in order that the body of sin (the fallen nature) might be brought to nothing, so that we will no longer be enslaved to sin.*”

Because Christ put sin to death when he died, and because we died with him, then we believers are now dead to sin. Our sinful self already died when Christ died.

At the same time, Paul applies the same union with Christ in **his resurrection**.

- Verse 5 — “*If we have been united within him in his death... we shall certainly be united with his resurrection...*”

- Verse 8 — *“If we died with Christ... we will also live with him.”*

Like I said kanina, ‘yong result po ng resurrection ni Cristo ay ‘yong ating resurrection din in the last days. That is also a subjective realization of our union with Christ. But that’s just one way we realize the effect of Christ’s resurrection (which we will discuss next week).

What effect of resurrection does Paul emphasize in this passage?

Look at the second half of verse 4, *“... just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”*

Ito rin po ‘yong binasa natin kanina sa **Ezekiel 36:26-27**. When the Spirit of God dwells in us and applies Christ’s work in us—he regenerates us, converts us, and sanctifies us. Mayro’ng pagbabago na nagaganap. Mayro’ng bagong buhay. At ang bagong buhay na ‘yon ay walang iba kun’di ang buhay ng kabanalan.

So **the whole argument of Paul** in verses 2-10 is this:

- We died with Christ. Therefore, we will no longer be enslaved to sin
- We were raised in Christ. Therefore, we will have and walk in newness of life.

Friends, **Christ’s death and resurrection not only changes God’s view of us. It also changes us.** Yes, Christ paid the penalty and satisfied God’s justice and obtained our forgiveness and justification in his sight. But by his Spirit, Christ also makes his victory over sin the reality of our lives.

The death and resurrection of Christ don’t just make it possible for believers to change (as if we have a choice to change or not to). **It is impossible for true believers to NOT experience change.**

Example: You certainly know some people who say, “Kilala ko naman ang Diyos. Tinanggap ko na naman si Cristo.” But you see their lives. Nothing changed.

When Christ, by his Spirit, applies to us the saving benefits of our union with him, there will be a **discontinuity** between our pre-conversion state and our current post-conversion state.

That’s because **in Christ**, we believers are “dead to sin and alive to God.”

Now, that leads us to ask, *“How then is it demonstrated in our present lives?”* Paano nakikita sa ating buhay bilang mga Kristiyano ang reyalidad ng ating pakiki-isa sa kamatayan at pagkabuhay-muli ng ating Panginoong Jesu-Cristo?

Sermon Point 2: The Demonstration of Such Union in our Present Lives

After Paul explained the reality of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection, he gives two primary imperatives:

1. **Consider** yourself dead to sin and alive to God (v. 11)
2. **Do not let sin reign** in your body (v. 12-13)

(These are essentially related. One leads to the other)

Now we need to understand what “being dead to sin and alive to God” **does not mean?**

- It does not mean being **insensitive** to sin and temptation (e.g., like a dead man insensitive to any touch)
 - Some teach that “dead to sin” means no more inclination to sin (Illustration: Kahit 10 person nang-aasar sa’yo or nangdi-discouraged, you just say, “Hindi ko na kayang mainis. I’m now dead to sin.”)
 - I myself have thought this way before, only to be disappointed with myself.
 - We will still feel the “passions” / “lust” of the flesh (cf. v. 12)
- Hence, it also does not mean you will no longer commit any sin (cf. Romans 7). It is an illusion to believe that we can be perfect in this life.

Being “dead to sin” means sin no longer has any claim or demand on the believer united to Christ’s death. For a short time, sin and its curse was laid on Christ. That’s why he died. But because he rose from the dead, he put an end to sin. Sin and death cannot hold him.

In the same way, sin no longer has any claim on the believer. Hence, **the Christian is no longer a slave of sin, obligated to render obedience**. Now Paul commands here:

(FIRST) “Consider (count, reckon) yourselves dead to sin and alive to God...”
Kilalanin mo, alalahanin mo na ito ka kay Cristo.

This is not just a make-believe. ‘Yong tipong hindi totoo, pero basta maniwala ka lang. Just pretend na ‘yong old sinful nature mo ay namatay, kahit hindi naman...

No. Know the truth, embrace the fact that in Christ you have already been “*dead to sin and alive to God.*” Keep in mind what you are now.

Let me try an illustration:

- For those who already got married, can you still live as if single ka pa rin? I believe yes. Hindi imposible ‘yon, at alam nating nangyayari nga ‘yon... But you have to remember who you are now. Look at your wedding ring, your marriage certificate, your wedding pictures, and ultimately your spouse... Then, that will move you to live accordingly as a married person.
- For those who are already graduates or already adults, can you still live as if you’re still a student or still little kids? Yes, it still possible. But you have to remember, hindi na ‘yong reality mo ngayon. You’re done with those seasons in life.

In the same way, it is possible for us Christians to still live as if we are still in sin and under the dominion of sin. But remember who you are in Christ. Remember your death and resurrection in Christ. Recall your conversion, recall your baptism. Then, you will want to live according to who you are now.

You see, brothers and sisters, **a major key to holy living is in our minds.** Kaya nga nabanggit din ni Paul sa Colossians 3:1-4, “*set your minds on heavenly things... for you have died and your life is with Christ.*”

Kaya ang panawagan po sa’tin na mga Kristiyano ay patuloy nating alalahanin, pagbulay-bulayan, panghawakan, at itanim sa ating mga isipan ang mga katotohanan na ‘to hanggang sa mas mawala ang anumang hangarin na bumalik ‘don sa ating lumang pagkatao.

(SECOND) Now, aside from setting our minds to consider our union with Christ, Paul says in verse 12: “*Let not sin reign in your body, to make you obey its passions...*” Do not be enslaved.

Do not be **enslaved** in what manner? Do not be enslaved to sin...

- **In terms of degree of sin**
 - READ James 1:14-15
 - It is one thing to be enticed by our own desires; it is another thing to carry it out into actual sin. It is one thing to still possess sinful passions, it is another thing to “obey” it.

- Sabi ni Cristo, tumingin ka lang ng malaswa sa hindi mo asawa o magalit ka sa kapwa, nagkasala ka na. And it's true. Kasalanan talaga 'yon, at lahat po tayo guilty of it many times.
- But it is another thing to curse someone and kill someone out of bitterness and anger. And it is another thing to actually flirt with someone or commit immoral acts towards someone out of lust.
- So don't obey your sinful desires or don't carry it out into actual and deeper degrees of sin.
- *[At the same time, do not be enslaved to sin...]*

- **In terms of frequency of sin**

- Verse 13: *"Do not present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness [tools to carry out sin]..."* (Grk. continuous present tense: *"Do not go on presenting..."*)
- Yes, we believers will still sin in this lifetime. Walang season po sa life natin na imposibleng makagawa tayo ng kasalanan (anumang degree yan). But it is a different thing to habitually commit a sin and position yourself to sin. 'Yong tuloy-tuloy pa rin. Walang pagbabago.
- So do not sin habitually or do not position yourself to keep on sinning.
- *[And lastly, do not be enslaved to sin...]*

- **In terms of attitude to sin**

- Paul says, *"Do not go on presenting yourselves to sin... but present yourselves to God."*
- Grk. Completed past tense. *"Present yourselves to God, once for all."* Although it cannot be completely and continually sinless, it is **a conclusive, deliberate, and decisive commitment to be an instrument of God for righteousness.**
- A person enslaved to sin will delight in sin and willfully find ways to sin. But a true believer will mourn over sin, and even if there's still a struggle within, he will still conclude and commit in his heart, *"I want to serve God rather than sin. So help me God."*

Brothers and sisters, before a believer is converted, sin is always and easily fulfilled and carried out. The patterns are established. The means are in place. But once the Spirit regenerated and converted us, he also sanctifies us. Those habits and means to an actual and habitual expression of sin will be and must be broken.

What dominates your thoughts, desires, and life should no longer be sin—but Christ and his righteousness, God and his kingdom.

And what is the ground of all these commands? Verse 13: Present yourselves to God... ***“as those who have been brought from death to life”*** As those who are already alive to God in Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Christ is both the source of and motivation for our holy living.

Final Application and Conclusion

As I end, let me exhort those of you who are not in Christ, yet long for a change in your life. Or perhaps, you profess to have in Christ, but you realize that you have seen no real change in your life.

- We may not command the Spirit to work in you and apply Christ's work on you, but the call of the gospel is simple: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—and you shall be saved. Turn away from your sins and go to him.”
- Christ died and rose again for sinners. On one hand, the resurrection is a fact to believe. On the other hand, it is a reality to experience in one's personal spiritual resurrection.
- So like Paul in Philippians 3, pray to God in your heart, ***“Let me know Christ and the power of his resurrection... Change me and I shall be changed.”***

And to us believers, doesn't this give us hope in our battles with sin? **Although we won't be perfect in this lifetime, there is no sin that is *“unmortifiable”* for a Christian.** Because Christ has raised us up with him, you and I can and will **grow in sanctification**. That is a fact. That is a promise.

You are already dead to sin and alive to God. Sin is no longer your master. You are no longer its servant. So consider yourselves as such, and present yourselves to God for his service.

Indeed, praise be to God who united us with Christ, our Savior, who not only paid our sins with his death, but also gave us new life with his resurrection. Amen.