

# Raised with Christ

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Preacher: Niels van de Kastele

[ 0 : 00 ] Father, we are in the dark by ourselves. There's so much about you, about what you're doing, about the heavenly places that we don't know. I pray that you would speak to us today. Open our eyes to see hidden things that we do not know.

Open our eyes to see the glory of Jesus. And we pray in his name. Amen. Alright, Anastasia.

Today's scripture reading is taken from Romans 6, verses 1 to 14.

Please follow along your Bible. If you don't have your own Bible, you can grab them on the side of the stage or at the back. Our passage is on page 886 of the Church Bible.

Hear then God's word to us today. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

[ 1 : 13 ] We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died, he died to sin, once and for all.

But the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[ 2 : 25 ] Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law, but under grace. Let us believe and respond to God's true and living word.

Great. Thank you, Anastasia. Let's keep that passage open. We'll be looking at a few passages, but it's more of a topical sermon, but mainly this one. What we're going to talk about is change.

Right? Most people in the world, they're looking for change. Politicians, they always complain, hey, you want change? Vote for me. You go to the bookstore, there's all these books about intellectuals writing how the world should change, or just self-help books, how we can change.

Go to YouTube, everyone is telling you, do this, and you will change. And of course, that's very popular, because to be honest, all of us want the world to change, don't we? All of us want ourselves to change.

[ 3 : 43 ] Not many of us will say, yeah, my life is perfect, everything about me is great, perfectly happy. We want change. But where do we find change? How does change come about?

Well, one thing that, yeah, I could preach on whatever I want. One thing that I love, as you may know, is the resurrection. The resurrection is, I think, something that's neglected in many churches, right?

It's all about the cross and the resurrection. Yeah. Okay, you know, what do we do with that? Of course, we say at Easter Sunday, that's when the world changed, right? That's when Jesus rose from the dead. The new creation started.

However, it doesn't feel like the world really changed, right? If you were, you know, if you were in Jerusalem, maybe you've noticed 2,000 years ago that something happened, but the rest of the world didn't notice, right?

And what does it do in our lives? I mean, it's okay, here's a great fact. Jesus rose from the dead, but what relevance does it have for us? And that was 2,000 years ago. There is this other resurrection in the future, right?

[ 4 : 45 ] One day, Jesus will come back and then everyone will rise from the dead. Those two resurrections, and Jesus is like the foretaste of that. But that way in the future, how about the present?

How has our lives changed because of the resurrection? Now, of course, in some ways, it has a huge impact, right? In the sense that we have certainty. How do we know there's a God?

How do we know who's the king? How do we know there's life after death? Well, Jesus rose from the dead. It tells you all those things. And if you're here, you wouldn't call yourself a Christian. I don't know if you ever looked into the resurrection, the evidence.

Something really happened. There is a God, and something amazing happened. Of course, the future resurrection gives us hope, right? Hope that one day all the problems will disappear, and sin will disappear, and evil will be gone.

Great. And yet, at the moment, well, Jesus is in heaven, right? And he's far away, and it may seem disconnected from our lives. And yet, the Bible talks about a third resurrection, one in the present, one in our lives.

[ 5 : 51 ] It's connected, of course, to Jesus, but it's here now in our lives. And so, I thought I would preach on that, because we're going to have baptisms, and I think it fits very well with that. As you may have heard the word baptism in the passage.

So, that's what we're going to talk about. And what does the Bible say? Well, we have been raised with Christ. We've been raised with Christ. It's a very common New Testament theme that, yeah, we were raised with Christ.

So, Ephesians 2, for example, but God, because of the great, in his great mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, made us alive together with Christ.

Even when we were dead in our trespasses, and raised us up with him, as he did us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Right? We've been made alive. We've been raised with him. A year ago, in our community groups, we did Colossians.

Same thing. Colossians 3. If then you have been raised with Christ. Seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Verse 3. For you have died.

[ 6 : 54 ] And the Bible says, you have died, and you have been raised. And this passage says the same thing, right? Verse 3. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death. We are dead and buried and then raised. It's in Christ.

It's with Christ. It's whatever happened to Jesus happened to us. I don't know if you know the prefix co, like co-author, co-owner, co-operation, co-dependency.

It means with, right? Well, Paul, in these passages, he uses all kinds of new words. He says, we have been co-crucified. We have been co-buried. We have been co-made alive.

Those kind of words. It's kind of, you were really there. Right? When Jesus was hanging on the cross, you were hanging right next to him. When he was buried in the tomb, you were buried in the same tomb with him.

[ 7 : 54 ] And three days later, when he walked out, you walked out with him. That is kind of what Paul is saying. Which, of course, is very weird, right? Because, of course, we weren't there. We weren't even born yet.

And I don't feel very raised. I'm in my 50s. My body is very clearly not a resurrection body. Right? We all know that. Paul actually agrees with that. Paul knows that.

So, in Colossians 3, again, what does he say? You have died. Your life is hidden with Christ in God. That resurrection life, it is hidden. You can't see it. It's hidden with Christ.

Because it's not yet physical. We're not yet physically raised. That will be at the end. That will be when Jesus returns. But, spiritually, you have been raised.

Spiritually, you've died. This is a spiritual reality. It happens when you believed in Jesus. Yeah, that's why it says, in Christ, with Christ.

[ 8 : 51 ] It's why it mentions baptism. I mean, it doesn't mean that the baptism, you know, does that. It's more baptism is, you baptize people who believe. It's their faith that has connected them to Jesus.

And that's why it says, well, you've been united with him. Right? In verse 5. You're united with Jesus. And so, through the faith, and now, his death and resurrection are kind of connected to you. You're connected to his death and resurrection. And that affects you. It becomes yours. That's 25 years ago. I was living in this world.

But then, you know, two months later, I died and rose. The passage says, because I became a Christian. In August 2001. And Paul can now say, yeah, you've been raised from the dead. You're raised with Christ.

It's really true spiritually. What does that mean though? What implications does that have? And that's where I want to go. And first of all, well, there's a new you.

[ 9 : 49 ] There's a new you. You've died and been raised. And so, there's a new you. You've got a new identity. Because, well, you've died and been raised. Of course, other verses, very clear about that, right?

2 Corinthians 5. We all know that. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. And the new creation and the resurrection is the same thing.

The old is gone. The new has come. That's exciting, right? Other passages talk about being born again. Like, you're a new person. It's not just something that happened to you.

It's changed who you are. That's how this passage talks about that, right? I mean, Paul starts with the question, what shall we say? Are we to continue in sin?

And then verse 2, he says, by no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? And he says, hey, we are the ones who died to sin. We are different, right?

[ 10 : 46 ] It's our identity. It's not just something that happened to us. And maybe you consider yourself, you're a lawyer or a doctor, a man or a woman, you know, identity, who we are. Actually, Paul says, you're the one who's died and been raised.

Which is a very total thing, right? I mean, dead people are really dead. And raised people are really raised. You're not just a little bit dead or a little bit raised.

Just like Jesus, right? Jesus died and rose. And so, yeah, you are a completely new person, spiritually. It's a huge thing. I mean, many people don't get that.

I mean, many people, they think Christianity is like a hobby. Like something to improve your life. Like yoga or gardening. And they come and, hey, I want to try out Christianity.

Maybe it will make my marriage better. Maybe it will help me be a better person. Or, you know, it will give me peace. You can't, you know, just add Christianity to your life.

[ 11 : 47 ] You can't, yeah, just, you know, try it out. This is dying and rising. You know, you can't try out being born, right? Being born again. You can't try that out.

This is a huge thing that there's a totally new you. The old you is dead. And there's a new you, a new life. That's what we do in baptism, right? Baptism is not just, you know, people go in the water. It's not just to wash some things off them, something external. It's a picture that this person actually died. Right? They're in the water. They're drowned. They're gone. We won't do that, of course. But we will... And then there's a new person coming out. That's what baptism symbolizes, right? You die and you rise. There was a time that people got a new name when they were baptized. Right? They were because you were such a new person. It's a bit of a hassle here, right? With your Hong Kong ID and those kind of things. We won't do that again. But you get the point. You are completely new. And why does that matter?

[ 12 : 50 ] Well, because don't all of us struggle with the old person that we are? Don't we struggle with guilt and shame and being unworthy and the things in our past and not just the things we've done, but the things that we are?

You know, how many of us are happy with ourselves? So that's why we want to change, right? And we think God looks at us as, you know, this terrible person. You know, many people who say, I wish I was dead in a way.

Well, the wonderful news is you can be dead and be new. The old can be gone and the new can be here if you come to Jesus, right? Because you died and were raised and your guilt and your shame and the unworthiness and your past, you've died.

All of that is gone. Right? No more. It has no more impact on your life. It's all gone. Spiritually, right? You're now a perfect, beloved, holy child of God, raised from the dead.

You are completely new. And that's wonderful. Every other aspect about you, I don't know, your sexuality, your desires, your exam results, your job, your success, your nationality, whatever you think defines you.

[14:03] And I don't know how you feel about any of those things. All of that, in a way, is gone. Physically, maybe, it's still here. Spiritually, there's a new you. That's new.

You have the new start that everyone wants. Isn't that good news? So many of us want to be new. I mean, how else can this happen? No YouTube video will make you new.

I mean, sometimes I meet someone who I haven't seen for two years, and I've got this cool beard now, right? And the doctor told me to work out, and they see me, and, oh, new you. Well, it's not a really new me, right?

Ask my wife. It's just superficial. But spiritually, yeah, you can be new in Jesus. And it's something you can't do by yourself. If you're here, you wouldn't call yourself a Christian.

If you want to change, if you want to make yourself new, the only way to do it is a miracle like this, like dying and rising. You can't do that by yourself, can you? But in Jesus, you can.

[15:03] God has given Jesus a wonderful gift. You just need to trust him, right? In Christ, with Christ. You need to be connected to Jesus. But you can be new. A new you.

Wonderful news. But is it just identity? It can feel like that. And that's a wonderful truth. It's the most amazing truth. But it can feel like it's just, yeah, it can still feel quite separate from us because it's not physical.

But second, in addition to a new you, there's new power. New power. If you are raised with Christ, you have new power.

Jesus' resurrection power in you. That's what we see here in Romans 6. That's where Paul goes, right? He talks about how we've been united, right? Don't you know, verse 3, that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, right? But then, what's the parallel later than in verse 4? In order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

[16:14] He's not talking about our physical resurrection, that will come later, verse 5, if we've been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. But the parallel, he says, is, well, Jesus was raised by the glory of the Father, and you can now walk in newness of life.

You can live a new life. Walking is kind of the metaphor for the Christian life. I don't know if it comes from numbers, right? The Christian life is where you're walking through the desert.

And so that's why it says walking. Yeah, of course in numbers people weren't changed. That's why they all died in the wilderness. But it says walking in newness of life, right? Just like Christ was raised.

And how was Christ raised, right? By the glory of the Father. All the glorious power of the Father by the Spirit raised the body of Jesus from the dead. And the kind of parallel means, well, that all the glorious power is now at work in you, so that you can walk in newness of life.

You can live a new life. Right? Or verse 6. Right? We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

[17:29] And when you were united to Jesus' death, Jesus' death that dealt with sin, he says that affects you, so that your body of sin, your sinful body might be brought to nothing.

And you would no longer be enslaved to sin. You'd be set free from the slavery to sin, that is the natural human condition. Something really happened.

You are dead to sin. You are alive to God. That is what it says. I don't know. I love this image. John Calvin talks about it.

How, yeah, this idea that Christ's death and resurrection kind of working in us. Just as the twig draws substance and nourishment from the root to which it is grafted, so those who receive baptism

or with right faith truly feel the effective working of Christ's death in the putting to death of their sinful nature, together with the working of his resurrection and the making alive by the Spirit.

Right? You know, you see this twig on a tree and it's green. Where does it get all its sap and nutrition and nourishment from? Well, from that tree that it's connected to. And Calvin says, you know, Jesus' death and resurrection, it kind of flows in you.

[ 18 : 42 ] Right? Because you're united to him by faith. Spiritually, that's flowing in you. And so you've changed. Right? Which is important. It's not just, you know, it's not just a theory or a principle.

It's real power. Because sometimes, you know, our salvation can feel like a legal transaction.

Right? Like adoption. Adoption is a wonderful thing. Right?

Where you, you know, we were sinners lost in the world, but then we are adopted to be God's children. It's wonderful. But adoption is just, can be just legal. Right? It happens legally out there somewhere, but it doesn't change me.

If you have a family and they adopt a child, that child doesn't get new DNA. Right? It just gets a new legal status. And of course, that's true. But, you know, but Christian faith is more than that.

I think, you know, sometimes we want to illustrate the Christian life and we do this a bit wrongly here. When we talk about why should you live differently. I don't know if you often heard this kind of be who you are.

[ 19 : 48 ] Right? You take this family, maybe they're an English family and they adopt a child from another country and that country, well, used to be a beggar on the streets and now, well, you're a part of a new family, so stop begging.

Right? And, you know, speak English. You're now, you're now English, basically. Now, that's, in a way that's true. Of course, the problem is that child doesn't know English.

That child hasn't changed. Right? Right? And then it's quite cruel to just say, be who you are. Like, pretend to be something that actually you're not. That you'll be later one day.

But no, that's not what it says. You have power. You have changed. You are dead to sin and alive to God. Verse 11. Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Not pretend, but, you know, just know, think, remember that you are dead to sin and alive to God. Spiritually, you were with Jesus on the cross when he dealt with sin and so you have changed.

[ 20 : 47 ] And you were spiritually with Jesus when he rose and you have changed. Yeah? It's not just be who you are legally. Be who you are spiritually. It's a bit like new DNA. I'm not saying the legal is not important.

I mean, the legal, of course, is fundamental. Ultimately, a child doesn't want new DNA. He wants a new family. Right? And we don't just want resurrection power. We want to be with Jesus. We want to be saved.

Right? That's what we really want. And yet, it's more than that. Right? God gives us change. He gives us new power. And so how should we apply that? How does the Bible apply it?

I don't know what you expect. Resurrection power. Does it mean health and healing and all your problems sorted and everything going your way? Well, it says new living.

The Bible would say new living. How is it applied? Well, verse 11, right? If, you know, if you are dead to sin and alive to God, verse 11, let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions.

[ 21 : 49 ] Do not present your members to sin as instruments to God, as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life. Right?

Live a new life. You know, you were a slave to sin, but you've been set free. You're free, so no longer live for sin. Live for God. Right? Stop living for sin. Be who you are.

Be the new you. Be who you will be forever. I think that's quite obvious in the passage. It's so clear. Right? All the other letters, you know, put off the old self, put on the new self.

It's all the same idea. New living. Now, when I say that, I guess there's two errors that we can make.

Right? I mean, some people think that it means we can be sinless, but of course we're not sinless.

Right? We're no longer enslaved to sin, but we still have a sinful body that's still calling us, that we often listen to. I mean, Paul wouldn't say, stop sinning, if Christians would never sin.

[ 22 : 47 ] Right? He wouldn't have to ask the question, hey, shall we continue to sin? Clearly, Christians are not sinless. And yet, at the same time, we are not helpless.

Sometimes Christians, okay, we were still sinners, and they feel like, oh, I'm just a hopeless sinner. I'm going to be sinning for the rest of my life. I sin so much more than I realize, and what's the point?

Christians would just feel defeated, and I can never change. God doesn't expect me to change. I'll just keep living and sinning. That's not it, right? I think that's a person who, I think that's a misunderstanding of Romans 7.

We'll talk about that another time. But no, you have changed. There is real resurrection power. Christians can change. Christians should change. Right?

Sometimes our standards are just too low. No, actually, Jesus wants you to change. I mean, if he wanted you to stay the same, why would he die for you? Right?

[ 23 : 47 ] He wants you to change. And so you don't have to sin. You have been set free from sin. You don't have to listen. We can live, yeah, we can live differently.

Because when I say that some of us are very sensitive and worried, like, oh, man, there's still so much sin in my life. Have I changed? Am I in Christ? Do I have this?

Well, the Bible doesn't tell us to worry about it. I mean, we're all different, right? We are different personalities, different histories. Sin has worked in different ways in our lives, different levels of maturity.

There isn't the kind of standard, and if you're above the standard, you're great, and underneath. It doesn't work like that. I think the best way is just progress. Is there progress in your life?

Compare your life now with five years ago. Have you grown? Right? Are you living differently from how you lived five years ago? That's a great thing, right?

[ 24 : 46 ] Or even one year ago, right? How have you changed? If there's progress, that's great. Of course, if things have gone backwards, like, man, five years ago, I was very different. I was much holier.

Then, of course, let's talk about that. Maybe something's going on. But is there progress? Not, have you met a standard? Is there progress?

I think that's the way to apply it. But then, of course, the next question is, how do I live like this?

Okay, we have resurrection power.

We can live differently. How do I do this? Is this something magic that's kind of where, you know, definitely to conjure up? It doesn't work like that. So just three things to finish, almost.

How do we live differently? How do we live this out? I mean, first of all, I hope you have seen, you should grow in your faith. How does this come?

[ 25 : 45 ] It comes from our relationship with Jesus, right? Because we're united with Jesus. So if your relationship with Jesus is growing, that will, you know, that will affect your connection with him.

Well, if it's a very bad relationship, that will affect you, right? So we should generally be growing in our faith, right? Abiding in Christ. Abiding in Christ. We heard that last week. Second thing, I think definitely pray in a moment, right?

You want to say no to sin, I guess you want to pray. You want to do something good that you feel you are unable to do. You don't have the courage or the strength to do it.

You know? Call out to God, right? Because ultimately it's his power, not ours. But for the rest, I think we should just try it. I mean, how do you depend on God doing this?

Well, you try it and you do it. I don't know if you understand what I mean. I mean, again, the doctor told me to work out. How do I know that I have the strength to do 20 push-ups?

[ 26 : 48 ] How do I know that? I don't just look at the floor, right? That's not how I know that. I'm not waiting for a tingling feeling. How do you know it? You get on the floor and you do push-ups, which I'm not going to do now, but you know what I mean, right?

You just do it. No, we have full service, so later if you want to. But you get the point, right? You just, you know, if you think you've got, if you believe God is doing this in you, you just do it, right?

Which means if you are, okay, here's one of my favorite books, Enjoying God by Tim Chester, talking about how we relate to each person of the Trinity and what they do in our lives.

He talks about the Spirit's power, and he says, well, yeah, you need to just do it. If you want to see the Spirit at work in your life, then attempt things that you feel you can't do without his help, right?

You do something that you think you can't do, and you find out you can do it. Do not complain that God never does anything dramatic in your life if you never attempt anything outside your comfort zone.

[ 27 : 54 ] That's great advice. So maybe you are, you want to say no to sin, you're tempted. So easy to give up.

But how do you find the strength to resist sin? Well, by resisting. And by going on resisting. And then, yeah. So it doesn't mean that you're not tempted. There will be temptation, but you know, you have the power when you resist.

That's when you find out, hey, I'm no longer enslaved. God is helping me. Maybe living for God. Maybe finding the courage to talk about Jesus to one of your colleagues. Or having that difficult conversation.

Or spending time in prayer. Or loving someone who is difficult. You know, you do it, and then you find out that actually I can do it. That's, I think, how it works.

Don't wait for a sign. Don't wait for a feeling. I think it's very, I mean, otherwise the Bible would tell us, right? Paul would actually give us, okay, here are the ten steps. It's not there. Paul says do it.

[ 28 : 55 ] And so try it, right? So maybe that's my challenge this week. Do something outside your comfort zone. Can you try and do something out of your comfort zone this week? That would be a great thing.

And you might be surprised. Because you are raised with Christ. You have changed. We can live a new life. Not just individually. As a church. Because going back to the world change.

Wouldn't it be amazing if here's a whole community, all of raised people. How different would it be, right? If all of us empowered by Christ's resurrection, all of us living a new life of love, wouldn't that be so different?

Wouldn't that change the world? I said in the beginning, you know, Jesus' resurrection didn't seem to change the world, right? No one noticed. That's true. They didn't notice Jesus walking out of the tomb.

But they noticed that within a few years there were Christians everywhere. People who were different. People who said no to sin. People who loved. Who loved their enemies.

[ 29 : 57 ] Who loved the unworthy. Who loved the marginalized. Who lived sacrificially holy lives. And as the church grew, the world grew in so many ways. So how is God going to change, you know, your family, your neighborhoods, your school, your workplace?

It's going to be through us. As we change. As we live, you know, by Christ's death and resurrection. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing for Wong Chu Hang to change? For Hong Kong to change? The world to change?

Why don't we? Yeah, that's such a great vision. Why don't we pray for that? And yeah, I'll pray and then we all will pray in song. A great song.

Our Father, these are truths that we don't often think about. What you've done for us, not just in the past, in the future, but right now in our lives. Help us to believe these truths, to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

Thank you for doing that. Because we are sinners. The only thing we deserve from you in our lives now is judgment. And yet you gave us the grace. You forgave us. You adopted us. And then you changed us.

[ 31 : 04 ] Please, would we be able to live that out? Help us to grow. Help us to pray. But help us to live this out. And would you use us? Would you transform this city?

Transform the places where we are through us? Would your church be, yeah, your instrument here in this world? We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.