

WCCC 2022

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Knowing the Power of His Resurrection (2)

Philippians 3: 10 – 11. To know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if any way I arrive at the resurrection from among the dead.

Ephesians 3: 16 – 17. In order that He may give you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts, being rooted and founded in love.

2 Corinthians 4: 7 – 11. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God, and not from us: every way afflicted, but no straitened; seeing no apparent issue, but our way not entirely shut up; persecuted, but not abandoned; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body; for we who live are always delivered unto death on account of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

Lord, we come to you again this morning and stand under your headship to ask for that anointing of the Holy Spirit to give us that power of resurrection to the words that will be spoken. We pray that you will press us onto the true knowing of yourself this day. And we commit this time into your hand. In the precious name of our Lord, Jesus. Amen.

I want to step back as we look at these verses in Philippians for just a moment. I do not want us to lose ourselves in the trees and not see that forest as a whole. Philippians is actually a very personal testimony. And the Holy Spirit kept this letter for our edification. His doctrinal letters of Ephesians and Colossians are tremendous revelations. But in this testimony in Philippians, sometimes we see the wonderful things in testimony even more than in doctrine. We have taken these two verses 10 and 11 and broken them up into 4 pieces so everyone can share on them. But if we truly step back and see what Paul was saying, I think you can detect the lyrics of a love song. This is Paul's love song. Our Lord poured onto Paul His amazing love on the road to Damascus. It is true that when Paul went onto the grid, there was this bright light from heaven and the kind of glory that absolutely threw Paul onto the ground. But when our Lord Jesus began to

speak to Paul, he spoke in a tone of love. Sometimes we read it out loud when we are preaching it. But if we heard the tone of Jesus' voice, we hear the voice of one who loves this renegade Saul. 'My dear Saul, you are so religious; you love God so much. But you are doing crazy stuffs. Do you not know you are not getting anywhere? You cannot kick against me'. I cannot speak the words like Jesus had spoken. But I know something. Paul was captured by love; he was captured by mercy. When he said what should I do Lord, he became a bond servant of Jesus within one minute. All Jesus had to do was placed upon Paul a robe of righteousness and said you are forgiven and Paul was in love. Some people strongly desire to be loved. Some people strongly desire to know the truth. Some people desire to know holiness. For Saul, he longed for righteousness. He was building up a portfolio of righteousness. But as his righteousness collapsed like filthy rags before this Skekinah glory, the Lord said, justified, righteous. All Paul strove for, perhaps through these thirty years, now accomplished by faith. And Paul found a perfect love to cast out all his fears and allow him to cast away all the rubbish of his portfolio. He no longer needed outward props of selfish deeds. I do not like it when people try to prop up the young people's self-esteem. Like they can do no wrong. Like they can do anything they want. This is rubbish. If someone finds the love of Christ, they do not need to pump self-esteem and psychological garbage into their heads.

In this testimony of Philippians, we can see Paul pursuing and capturing the one who captured him. In Philippians 3: 10, he found a doorway that could lead him to know more of his lover. That I may know Him. He said I could gain more experience of my lover by the power of His resurrection. The more I could share in His suffering, the more I could find out about Him. The more I am conformed to His death, the more I would be like Him. He was singing a lover song, and he was climbing a mountain of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If I may draw a parallel with the passage in Philippians, I would say Paul was like the Shulamite woman pursuing Solomon. Remember how the love song opens up? Oh Solomon, kiss me again. Help me I am lovesick. That was Paul. He was willing to go through whatever sufferings so he could know more about his lover. Some of you do not know how to appreciate the love song because you do not know how much Jesus loves you. We have no idea of the things that He has prepared for them who love Him. We have no idea how much He loves us. Remember how Paul said that I may gain Christ? I pose you this question. Who is gaining who? I think the Lord gained Paul. Paul said I have to gain Christ. Do you love the Lord Jesus with all your mind and soul and strength? If so this book of Philippians opens up like a love song. Do not let us get lost just in all these doctrines.

This doorway that Paul found to go deeper into the experience of Christ is not really the power of the resurrection nor the sharing of the sufferings of the shepherd. What is this doorway to the power of resurrection and the fellowship of the sufferings? Of course, the doorway is the Lord. And more specifically as

our brother shared yesterday, the doorway is Christ crucified. If you want to know the power of resurrection, then we have to go through Christ crucified. And resurrection is on the other side of the doorway. There is that finished work, working actively. And then there is the fellowship of His sufferings. We picked up our cross and pursued Christ crucified. As Paul said in Colossians, 'I am doing my part in sufferings for you, and I fill up that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh, for His body, which is the assembly. I will do it with joy'. Just like with Jesus, He endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him.

The Moravians were behind the initiation of the modern missionary movement which eventually touched China in such a profound way. They were a family living together in Germany. And one-third of the family left and went out to Greenland, Caribbean, Alaska and places unknown to preach the gospel. And do you know what their motto was? It was 'Hidden in the wounds of Christ'. They were sharing in the sufferings of Christ when they were preaching the gospel. They had to learn the language of the Eskimos and then preached the gospel to them. So, you see we discover more of the Lord as we touch Christ crucified both in sharing the sufferings and in the knowing of the power of the resurrection.

Last time we looked at the church at Ephesus and we saw how the Lord turned on the power grid there. Maybe God is foolish but He chose the most wicked city to build His church. You live near San Francisco? Congratulations! But we are competing with you in New York and also in Los Angeles. We do not even want to mention Seattle in Washington. All of these cities are off the grid. They are dark and full of sins. And God said build My church. And in Ephesus, it seemed that Jesus was standing over the city like a great colossus. 'I will build My church and the gates of hades shall not prevail'. And despite great opposition, the work was done. The Lord mightily built His church.

Paul was writing this letter to the Ephesians more than ten years after his missionary journey to there. And the Ephesians had experienced the wonderful power of the resurrection. The gospel went forth and people were saved. Then why was Paul writing the letter? Do they still need something? Indeed, they needed something and Paul was praying for special revelation. They needed further revelation. Yesterday we talked about that they needed the revelation of the power of resurrection to raise them from their deadness from sins and trespasses. As we said yesterday, most of us did not know how dead we were when we got saved. How many of you thought you were still pretty good when you asked Jesus to be your savior. Some of you must have felt that way. Well, I know my brothers and sisters are bad. I am the best of the bunch. I am not so bad. I am not really dead. I am just a little disobedient. Maybe when you were a kid and you stole your sister's lollipop, it was not that bad. But you were still dead in your trespasses and sins, walking according to the age and spirit of this world. There is no advantage of getting saved later in life. I was saved when

I was twenty years old and I knew what a sinner I was. I had a list of grown-up's sins. But it was a few years after my salvation that I realized how evil I was, how sinful I was and especially, as our dear brother Ted pointed out how I had committed iniquities against God alone. Against you alone have I sinned.

So Paul was writing to tell them that he wanted them to see all that God did on their behalf when God in His mercy raised them from the dead. But he also wrote the book of Ephesians ten years later for another reason. The children of God needed to see that the resurrection power not only saves and gives them lives. They needed to see it takes the power of resurrection to change the inner character. It is one thing to be saved from outward sins. But what does it take to change and renew us in the inner man? How hard has the Holy Spirit have to grasp and work to build within us the strength of His might so that Christ may dwell in our hearts within? Do you think it takes more power to raise you from the dead or to transform you to the character of Christ? I think it takes more mighty power to change us within to the character of Christ. The reason I said this is because God has to employ double power to change our inward character. He uses the power of the resurrection but he also has to employ the power of the cross. And of course, in God's economy, the truth of the matter is that they work hand in hand together as the power of God. Think about this power to change us from within. It is no longer a grid. It is an inner power. Remember yesterday I talked about that you have to be in Christ to be on the power grid? And you need to be submitted under the headship of Christ to be on the power grid. But this morning we are saying Christ needs to be in you for the power of God to change you from within.

The United States is just the best country for inventing terrible things. I was in a conference last week and a brother reported to me that nowadays there is a church in the U.S. where you can get power. It seems like an impersonal thing. You go online, choose which of the nine gifts of the Spirit you want. You get tongues for \$100, prophecy for \$200. They guarantee you the gift of the Spirit. You pay more for gift of healing. And if you are not satisfied with the package, you can send it back and they will send you another one for more money. What is this distribution of the Holy Spirit's power? Is it some kind of a low watt battery that you can pass around?

Here is Paul talking about the power of God in the church. In that magnificent building statement in Ephesians 4, Paul talked about the church coming into the unity of the faith. Transformed from individual parts to one new man – one mature man, measured according to the stature of the fullness of Christ. This is talking about character. This is not talking about power and wattage and how many people you can heal with your hand. This is talking about transformed sinners into the bride of Christ without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. He is defining divine character within us, so that the church can come around that ground of the power of resurrection. We become part of the new creation from the moment we are saved.

In 2 Corinthians 5 we see this definition of a new creation. We see strategically that the power of the cross has to have an effect in us for the new creation to be real and living. In verse 14, he said, *'For the love of the Christ constrains us, having judged this: that one died for all, then all have died'*. That was where the new creation starts. We are all dead together. In verse 15, it said, *'He died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and has been raised'*. We were all dead but now we are all alive. We no longer live for ourselves. We live for the one who has made us come alive. Verse 16 – 17 continued, *'So that we henceforth know no one according to the flesh; but if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. So if anyone be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold all things have become new'*.

What I am trying to say is that Philippians 3:10 is not talking about a way to gain power. In Philippians 3: 10 – 11, Paul listed four things. 1. I want to know Him. 2. I want to know the power of resurrection. 3. I want to share in His sufferings. 4. I want to be conformed to His death. No, no, no. It is only in Christ can you experience the power of resurrection. Only in Christ can you share in the fellowship of His sufferings. It is a very personal thing. Only in Christ can you be conformable to His death.

Can I illustrate with three terrible illustrations? I mean, how can you explain only in Christ can you learn these things. The first illustration – remember our brother Lance Lambert? He used to call himself loss Lambert. Do you remember the story that Lance told us that when he was a young preacher in the British army? He was a chaplain. In Egypt, he got very sick. He had to recuperate and he did that in the house of two missionary sisters. You know the sisters do make the church go around. One of the sisters was named Gladys. And these two sisters worked hours and hours of prayers. Maybe you have read Rees Howell's book 'Intercessor'. These two sisters have gone through Rees Howell's school of intercession. They had bibles worn out with the Old Testament including Leviticus and also worn-out New Testament. And Lance said they would get a phone call from Egypt or Israel that someone needed prayer. And after they got this phone call, they would go pray. They pulled out their bibles and started quoting scriptures as swords until things were done. And Lance learned the power of prayer in fellowship with those two sisters. You see what I am saying? You have to learn the power of resurrection through Jesus exclusively. Christ in me teaching me the power of resurrection.

How about sharing the fellowship of His sufferings? You know it is an amazing thing when two people have been in the army serving together during a war. It brings two men closer together than brothers. Why is it? The veterans were celebrating in Hawaii for their anniversary. There were only a few left. They flew over from Ohio or Iowa. As soon as they met each other, they started to cry. With all the deaths and sufferings around them, they went together through a suffering and it locked them together. So that is the deal. If you walk with Christ

in you through times of sufferings, what do you learn? You learn the grace of God to suffer. And you learn you have found one who sticks closer to you than a brother. During the times when you share in the sufferings, you found that He says to you, my son, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

How about being conformed to His death? You know a lot of times a son just does not understand his father. My father is such a jerk. He thinks he knows everything. He never admits he is wrong. He expects the most. Of course, one day the son becomes the dad. Oh, I understand now. As we become more lamb like in our nature, the more we understand why Jesus said or did certain things. We do not understand a lot of things Jesus did until we come into His nature. So Paul said, I am going to know Him as He builds His lamb like character in me. These things are learned through the power of resurrection and the fellowship of the Lord. This was exactly what Jesus did. Jesus said continually, I do nothing out of myself. You see Jesus has His own authority and power, but He did not use it. He used the power and authority that the Father gave Him. And that was His secret.

And so it is with us. We have been born again and we are on the grid. But do we want to serve the Lord? If you do, it will help if we know Him a little bit. I guess you can serve God with the gifts of the Spirit but not know the Lord very well. I suppose you can do things with power that He never asks you to do. But in the end will that be acceptable? It is true that it is like we are on the grid. I do not know how many of you feel that you have received the power of the Holy Spirit as a young Christian. But I certainly felt that way. It is as if you are in your house. The electricity is on and all the lights are on. All electrical things are on and all that power. Then the Lord says, you need to let Alexa takes over. You need to get yourself hooked up. Lights do not need to be on all the time. Alexa, turn off the lights. Until you get this thing programmed by the life of Christ within you, you will be using the wrong power.

My brother Daniel comes from Houston, Texas. What this means is that he owns oil stocks. The way they used to dig oil in the old days was that they drilled a big pipe down and down until eventually it hit oil. The people would say we got oil – black gold. He also hit a lot of rocks and a lot of dirt, a lot of water and all kinds of strange chemicals. That was a wild catch here. They needed to tame this thing. They put some kind of caps and pipes there and they got it off where they could distill it.

Now you see if you are not capped in the power of resurrection, you may go all over the place. And I guarantee you this is what happens to the servants of God. They burned out. I was serving God with all the lights on. I went here and there to preach by the power of God. And of course, eventually, that power ran out. Paul experienced a lot of that. The Lord revealed Himself in Paul. Even as a young believer, he experienced the power of the resurrection. Paul literally experienced the power of resurrection when he was stoned to death in Lystra. And in his third missionary journey, this young man Eutychus fell out of the

window when Paul was talking too long. Paul ran out and put himself on his body just like Elijah in the Old Testament and breathed on him and Eutychus came back to life. Paul was also learning how to utilize the power of resurrection by the inner life of Christ.

I will give you a few examples. Paul would engage in spiritual warfare sometimes by resurrection power in prayer. And he had learned to dispense this power according to the will of God. And he had found at times he can pray as effectively even when he was not with them. You remember in I Corinthians 5, Paul said although I am not with you in body, I am with you in spirit. And I am saying you need to take that man and put him out of the assembly, so he will stop sinning openly. Though I am absent in body, I am with you in spirit and it is done. You notice in the end in some of his letters, he said please pray. Why? Because there was great opposition in some cities and Paul wanted doors open. And he found that he could open doors in some most incredible places by the power of the spirit in prayer. And when Jesus who holds the key to the doors open them, no one can shut them. Maybe the Jews resisted him. Maybe the Roman government resisted him. Maybe the business men resisted him. But when God opens it, people are being saved and churches are being built.

When the Lord wants to start something, He has people pray that the door will open for that particular place. When Paul and Barnabas went on their first journey, they came to Cyprus which is Barnabas' hometown. And there they met Sergius Paulus, who was the proconsul. Paul wanted to preach the gospel to Sergius Paulus. But there was a magician named Elymas. He was doing things to hinder Paul from seeing the governor. Paul said in the name of Jesus, get out of the way. Not only did that magician went blind, but Sergius Paulus got saved. This is the power of the resurrection.

I wonder what Paul meant in sharing and knowing in the power of resurrection. The more he saw the effectual work of the power of resurrection, the more confidence he had that God will overcome even when things were going terribly. I wonder whether Paul was praying one day, and was fellowshiping with the Lord, and the Lord said, you know, what I am trying to do is to explain things to you and it will be better if you just get on the elevator. And he took him up to the third heaven.

Do you see this spiritual warfare? Do you see the spiritual victory from the perspective of heaven? When he got back down to earth, he did not tell everyone what he saw. But have you ever noticed somebody who have seen Christ in the resurrection power that somehow that person got larger. When you see someone who has been there, they are larger. They have a different view point. They have more gravitas inside them. I do not know whether you have listened to Brother Austin Sparks' messages. I have never met him but one thing I can say just for sharing the audio is that when he opened his mouth to speak, you can feel and know that he had been there. He was not talking about the ground of resurrection; he was standing on the ground of resurrection.

It was about fifty years ago that I met Brother Stephen Kaung. I was a young pastor at a meeting in North Carolina and Brother Kaung was speaking in the same city in North Carolina. And some dear brothers and sisters invited me to go down to this house where Brother Kaung was speaking. They said this is the guy who translated Watchman Nee. And I read a lot of those books. So I went to the meeting. Maybe there were forty people there. I immediately narrowed it down and looked for someone who is Chinese. There were about four or five Chinese men. I saw a tall and handsome guy and I thought that had to be him. And I saw another big strong guy and I thought that had to be him. But our brother was sitting in the front row with a little grey suit on. Everybody else was wearing shorts and flip flops. And when he finally stood up, I saw this little man. Actually, his Parkinson was pretty bad and he was shaking. All he had was this bible in his hand and it shook. And it took him some time to find a page. But then he prayed. He said, dear Lord and I knew he had been here. You can say it in different ways, but you can tell when someone knows Him and said it. And every single, simple word of his prayer killed me. I was a pastor but I did not know this Lord. But he knew this Lord. There was just something different about someone who had been there. That is what the Lord wants in His church. When someone comes to speak into our midst, we do not need him to give brilliant and intellectual messages. A simple prayer, a simple testimony, and you know Jesus is there.

My point is that the more you know Jesus, the more power the Christ in you. If you come here this weekend to gain more knowledge of the power of resurrection, you may be disappointed. But if you understand what I am saying, then you just pray this simple prayer, Jesus I want to be there. I know in reality what I am talking about. Then you learned the burden of our conference this week.

Imagine Paul who saw our Lord on the road to Damascus. He had no idea about God. He had never seen God. Now he saw shekinah love. In all his righteousness, he never heard a word from God, and now Jesus was talking to him. This changed his whole life inside. But we need to be careful as we continue to make this point. Paul saw the Lord on the road to Damascus. And Paul also saw Christ crucified on the road to Damascus. For if you are able to see the power of resurrection, then you also have to have seen the cross. And we have our brother speaking how Paul had to get rid of his rubbish. What cost it was once he had seen the love of his life. Whenever we want to see more of Him and the power of resurrection but we cannot see it, then there must be something standing in the way of the cross. But I do not want to talk about the cross because the other brothers are doing a better job. I want to keep it positive.

So I am going to look at it from another angle. First, the Lord reveals Himself to us. And then we go through the stripping of the cross, which brings us to our goal. It is like the familiar verse that we know in 2 Corinthians 3: 18 *'But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to*

the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit'. How kind and merciful of the Lord to show us Himself. What Paul was really saying is that we are looking into the word of God, and we see the glory of Jesus. And that is the beginning of a transforming work. The Lord shows you a vision. You may receive a call from the Lord. And it is a call to live and serve Him by the resurrection life. You see it on a mountain top, or in Sonoma State University. I saw the Lord; I heard His call. It is a wonderful experience. Then we go down from the mountain through the stripping in the valley. If I said to you, how many of you want to be a powerful, influential person like Joseph and be a prime minister? You will say, yeah that's me. Though God gave Joseph dreams of greatness, and took him through the road until he became great in spirit, yet when Joseph finally got to that greatness, it sure looked different from what he saw when he first got the vision in his dream.

So, we have Paul's Galatians testimony – the resurrection, the cross, the goal. First God baited him with a vision. Do you think God wants to capture you? So, Paul was like a donkey and God had this little stick and dangle it in front of Paul and said, look Paul. And what did Paul see? Galatians 1: 15 – 16 *'But when God, who set me apart even from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I may announce Him as glad tidings among the nations, immediately I took not counsel with flesh and blood'*. God revealed it to me and I got His message. Let us go and preach. But wait a minute, there were some problems. I did not consult with flesh and blood but I went to the desert for three years. Paul, I want you to catch up on your bible reading. I want you to see me from Genesis to Malachi. And when he got out of the desert he went down to Jerusalem and he started preaching. The apostles said, wait a minute. I think you better go home to your parents. And indeed, he went home to his own city. He went through that terrible experience of wanting to serve God with all his heart, mind and soul but his flesh kept holding him down. He said there is nothing good within me.

And then Galatians 2: 20 goes right through Christ crucified. He was crucified with Christ. Now Christ not only is revealed to him but is now living out of him. This brings us to Galatians 6: 14 – 15. Here was Paul, the mighty man of God. *'But far be it from me to boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation'*. Through Christ crucified, right to the new creation.

Let us talk about Paul's revelations in the book of Romans. Whatever happened to him in his Christian experience, he understood spiritually. So when he was baptized he got the revelation. I do not think Peter was so clear on this. But Paul immediately saw it. Romans 6: 4 *'We have been buried therefore with Him by baptism unto death, in order that, even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in the newness of life'*. Paul saw that he was living on the resurrection side. It pulled him up

from the water and he was living in the resurrection life of Jesus. Unfortunately, he bumped into Romans 7, the 'I' zone. 'I do not understand what I am doing. I want to be holy, but I am not. I want to be righteous, but I am not. There is nothing good within me that is in my flesh. I went through the baptismal thing in position, but I have not experienced it yet. What a wretched man I am. Who will deliver me from this death?' That was when he came into the resurrection zone. At the point of his complete discouragement, the Holy Spirit breathed on him. Romans 8: 1 – 2 *'There is then now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.'* Verse 11 said, *'But if the Spirit of Him that has raised up Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He that has raised by Christ from among the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies also on account of His Spirit which dwells in you.'*

How do you get out of the sloth of chapter 7. You walk in the Spirit. Suddenly you feel the empty gravity as you are raised up onto higher ground. So, Paul expressed these things not only for himself but also to the church. And again, we see these threefold processes. First you lay hold of a vision. Then you are stripped by Christ crucified. And then you live on new ground. This is the Lord transforming the inner man. So in Ephesians 4: 22 we see the turning point as Paul spoke to the church. And these three processes show us the three stages. In chapter 4 verse 22 – 24 *'Namely your having put off according to the former conversation the old man which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lusts; and being renewed in the spirit of your mind; and your having put on your new man, which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness.'* Which of those three verses (22 – 24) comes first? Well, he mentioned 22 first, 'put off the old man'. How can you put off the old man? You cannot, unless you have seen verse 23. This verse talks about a renewing in the deepest part of your mind by revelation as to who you are. Now I ask you a question. Are you the old man or the new man? A lot of you will say, I am somewhere in between. I am like the neutral man. I try not to be the old man. But when God enlightens you, you see that the old man has been crucified. You do not have the old man. Who are you? Well, then am I the new man? Is it possible that I am the new man? Who is this new man? It is the man with Christ in me; living His life out through me. Is that who I am? Notice the definition in verse 24 of the new man. He is in the process of creation. He is created in the likeness of God in these two dimensions. You are in the process of new creation created in the likeness of God in truthful righteousness and holiness.

And that is who you are. You got to see that it is finished. I am not the old man anymore. Alright, then take off your pajamas. And step into who you are by the power of resurrection. But you see the whole thing depends on you seeing who you are. And then you go through the process of laying aside the old man. The old man had a lot of habits. Then you have to unlearn some of the old habits. Now they are no longer your habits. You just need to get rid of them. You got bigger fish to fry. You are on the new ground now. Let go of all those nasty

temptations. You saw the light of all the evils lurking on television and media; especially on the devil's tool – the iPhone. Just an example, if the light (Holy Spirit) really flashes on what is really going on behind pornography, do you get the idea that those people employed in pornography love each other or having a wonderful time? They probably hate each other. And hate what they are doing. That is all a fake show anyway. But do you feel that there is something powerful in there? It is the prince of the air, seducing away the children of God. For the deliverance, you need to swipe that off. You got to see who you are first. If you are one of those who think you are no difference from the nonbelievers, then you do not know the truth. Let me finish with one perspective of finding the resurrection power in ministry. Thank God for every young person who feels he is called to serve the Lord, trying to find ways to teach Sunday school or whatever work it might be. The problem of the servants called of God are twofold. They either think they are invincible or unlimited or that they are so weak they cannot do anything.

My wife and I like to read Spurgeon for devotion in the morning. And he has one quote that got a lot of the servants of God in trouble. It said the servants of God is immortal until God is through with them. So if a man thinks he can do anything and go anywhere and he has super power, then he is in for an exhaustion episode. And for any servants of God, it is your fault if you have not read Hudson Taylor's spiritual secret, because you will come to the end of yourself. I got a list of eleven names that I was going to go through here of the servants of God who got exhausted. But they all learned the next lesson of the servants of God. And that is the power that comes through in a vessel once he is broken. It sounds like a reversal. We think God will pump up a lot of electricity in a servant of God. But we see in this story here that Paul said, 'but we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves. We are afflicted in every way but not straitened, seeing no apparent issue, but our way not entirely shut up.' Is it unkind to say that God has to break a servant's health in order to have the power in the treasure in the vessel come out? It is to say God has to break his delusion of his omnipotence before the treasure can come out. And then even though he seems so weak, yet his words are like gold.

Paul gave us a whole letter in 2 Corinthians of things he had been through that made him the mightier in ministry. The famous saying 'that when I am weak, then I am strong, the Lord told me'. In the first chapter of 2 Corinthians, he talked about going through such a difficult time that he despaired of life until he learned that he could only trust in the one who raised him from the dead (2 Corinthians 1:9). There is more which shows that here is someone who knows the Lord. 2 Corinthians 13: 4, *'for if indeed He has been crucified in weakness'* – who is he talking about? He was talking about the Lord Jesus. He was crucified in weakness as a human being, weak and exhausted. *'Yet He lives by God's power; for indeed we are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God towards you.'* The whole 2 Corinthians is about our lowly flesh; how God's

strength will come through it if we get out of the way and let Christ live in you and through you.

A couple of verses in 2 Corinthians 2: 14 – 16 and the story behind it and we are done. *'But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ, and makes manifest the odor of His knowledge through us in every place. For we are a sweet odor of Christ to God, in the saved and in those that perish: to the one an odor from death unto death, but to the others an odor from life unto life; and who is sufficient for these things?'* Here he said the Lord always leads us in triumph. That is resurrection ground. But here is the story. Paul went to Troas and the door opened for the gospel in the city of Troas. The saints had been praying and the door was opened. He got there and meant to stay for a couple of months perhaps and reap the harvest of souls. But he failed. He packed up his bags and left with the door opened and the work undone. The servant of God failed. Why did he fail? It was because he had written 1 Corinthians and he sent it to the Corinthians by Titus. And he was waiting to hear whether the church was alright or the church was going to go under. And when Titus was late showing up, Paul could not take it. He could not preach the gospel because he was upset that he did not know what was going on in Corinth. And he left and went across the strait to Philippi and tried to find Titus to see what happened in Corinth. When he finally met Titus, Titus said, 'Paul, God came down on that church by your letter. The people had kept the testimony of Jesus and they confessed'.

Paul said this as he looked back. Jesus has taken resurrection ground. He is leading a triumphal march into the New Jerusalem. He let me joined in that triumphal procession. Even though I seemed to fail, yet I did not fail. It turned out that my inability in Troas was a testimony of God's deep love for Corinth. And the lesser had to be sacrificed for the greater issue of the church and the testimony of Jesus Christ in Corinth. So even when the servant of God failed, yet he never failed in the triumphal procession of Christ because He turns everything into victory by the power of the resurrection.

No wonder Paul wrote this love song – the Epistle to the Philippians. Imagine what it was like living in a Roman jail. They might come at you any minute and kill you. And he was pursuing Jesus while he was in jail, singing love songs. What am I doing today. Forgetting what lies behind, stretching forward to what is before. I press on, press on to know Him. He is my high calling. He is my reward. He is my lover. The power of resurrection through Christ in me.

O Lord, that is our simple prayer. You work this work within our hearts and souls. Gather us as one together which no man can do except by the power of the resurrection. Thank You for Your mercy. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.