

**Easter 1 B March 31, 2024**

**The power to rise again – Power Points of Life series**

**Read: Mark 16: 1 – 8 and/or memorize: Mark 16: 5b - 6**

**One Easter morning, a church organist made a terrible mistake. He had failed to set his alarm for the sunrise service and slept right through it. The congregation forgave him. His colleagues teased him. The senior pastor pondered it all in his heart. A year later, he phoned the organist at 4 AM. When the organist answered the phone, the pastor said, "It's Easter! Christ is risen! You should do the same! "**

**It's Easter! I'm glad you have risen. Christ is risen and best of all, someday we will rise with Him. As the early church scrambled to understand the resurrection of Jesus, they made an incredible discovery. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead was available to them.**

**Paul says to the Christians at Ephesus, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened to the incomparable, great power for us, who believe, the same power exerted in Christ, when he was raised from the dead." So, this Easter Sunday, I have powerful news for you. It is not about political power, not about nuclear power, not even about willpower. It's about the power of the resurrection available to you and me.**

**Resurrection power helps us get up. I don't know about you, but I know I've always loved Easter. It was not because we had a great choir. The church I grew up in was very small. The choir was only passable. But I love Easter for the joy of it.**

**Even as a kid, I realized that Easter made Jesus alive to me. When Satan had done his worst, God reared back, and did his best. He raised his only Son from the dead. Here's the best news, the same power that stirred in Jesus on that "getting up day" is available to us, through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

**We, who were dead in our trespasses and sin find new life in Christ. We who are walking through the valley of the shadow of death find a Savior who walks beside us. We, who quit living before we died, settling down to just survive, who are still marking time, but missing life – we, too, can rise again! John 10:10 tells us, "For Christ came that we might have life and have it abundantly."**

**Resurrection power helps us break free.** The question on the mind of the women at that first Easter was, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" It's one thing to get up. It's another thing to get out.

In 2006, 13 miners went down into the Sago mine in West Virginia. Only one of them came out alive. There was an explosion in the mine. All sorts of junk was spewed into the mine, including carbon monoxide. The men followed the safety directions they had been given, but, unfortunately, it took their rescuers 41 hours to get to them.

When the rescue team finally got into the mine, everyone they found was dead, except for Randal McCloy, who was close to death. He was taken to the hospital in a coma, and spent months recovering. His doctors actually had not expected him to do so, but his family held onto their faith and the hope that Jesus gave them.

When he went home, his doctor, Russell Biundo said, "It was almost like he was resurrected." The rural road on which he and his family lived was renamed "Miracle Road." Randall broke free from the power of death. A lot of people are trying to break free from various problems they have. Many turn to self-help methods to accomplish this.

I googled the words, "self-help" and got 9.5 billion hits. You can break free from many things. You can break free from affairs, domestic abuse, wasting time, constant frenzy, shoplifting, smoking, alcohol, anorexia, gambling, greed, pornography or pedophilia so there is no shortage of things to break free from.

Many turn to self-help groups to help them break free and they are helpful, but there's one who can help even more. **True freedom is found in Jesus Christ.** He brought us out of slavery to sin, paid our ransom on the cross, and rolled the stone away. In John 8:36, we are reminded, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

**Resurrection power helps us restore relationships.** The angels said to the woman, "He is risen. He is not here. Go tell his disciples and Peter." "Hold on, they should tell Peter along with the other disciples. Peter, the so brash one; so confident, so cocky. Peter, who had abandoned Jesus, on the night of his betrayal.

He denied his Lord. Disappointed, devastated, destroyed he heads towards Lake Galilee, to shed his tears and lick his wounds. Yet, the angel specifically tells the women to tell Peter, along with the other disciples. Not only should they tell him, but Jesus gives him a specific location to be, "I'll meet you in Galilee."

As John tells the story, Jesus finds Peter on the lake. He's fished all night and caught nothing. There, in the fresh breeze of the morning mist, too old friends, get back together again. Jesus restores the relationship and gives him a mission.

It's Easter! I don't know what calls you need to make or what letters you need to write. I know that things happen over the years between people. Hurtful words are spoken. Perhaps some words are not spoken at all. Different views become disagreements that escalate to conflicts and those become feuds.

Jesus understands broken relationships. He knows when things become difficult. He helps mend the fences, and when reconciliation is not possible, he grieves the loss with us. He cares, because he's been there himself. He can help heal you. He can help restore that relationship.

Resurrection power helps you live forever. So, whatever you are facing today, don't be defeated; don't wave the white flag of surrender. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead will give you eternal life. Sickness does not come to stay, it comes to pass. No trouble enjoys eternal life. Every problem has a lifespan. Christians do not live "under the circumstances." They stand on the promises!

When trouble comes, as it surely will, when life has stripped you of every worldly possession, and left your body a bundle of sores, as it surely can. When friends make fun of you, and you wonder what awful wrong you did to deserve this, when life is gone, Hope will last. We can say with Job, certainly a man who understood suffering, these joyous words: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the end he will stand upon the earth, and I will see him with my own eyes."

To all who are here today, maybe you are a member of this church. Maybe you've never been to church before. Maybe you've practiced the faith for years; maybe you feel like you have no faith at all. Maybe you're tired. Maybe you're broken. Maybe you need reassurance of eternal life. Maybe you just want to say, just as Peter did, "I

**love you, Lord." Whatever your circumstance, resurrection power changes it.  
Resurrection power gives new life and hope to all who are in Christ.**

**The joy of that new life and new hope is this: "The grave no longer has a hold on you."  
Don't just celebrate that today. When you believe in Jesus, it's yours forever!**

**Count me in: How will you reflect your Resurrection power?**