

“Coming Alive - Once for All”

Scripture: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Romans 8:10-11; Romans 6:1-11

Graphics: Coming Alive, cross and tomb

Big Truth: The Good News is that we are alive in Christ forevermore. Faith in the death and resurrection of Christ gives us everlasting life. Yet, our experience now is sometimes less than. The past few months have felt more like death than life. Yet, Jesus is still alive and calls us again to come alive in Him every day. Coming Alive by the Spirit in us is the call of the disciple of Jesus.

Focus phrase:

1. Introduction

- A. We're **COMING ALIVE!** That's the title of this series from the book of Romans.
- B. So far, we've looked at God's gracious plan for our salvation...heard Paul tell the Christians in Rome that they, "...were dead in their sin, BUT GOD made a way for them to have life in Jesus Christ."
- C. Last week, we heard Paul proclaim that ONE MAN, Jesus, is the answer to the sin problem that we face...started by Adam, the first human.
- D. This week, we'll move to Romans chapter 6.
- E. But before we get to our scripture passage, let's talk about **golf**. Golf courses are open again and I know some of you have been enjoying some social-distancing on the links.
- F. The flagship golf event every year is the Masters, which is held at Augusta National in Georgia, usually in April. Except this year, of course, since it got postponed.
- G. At the Masters, names like Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Tiger Woods roll from the lips of those who talk about golf. One name that'll probably never surface in a conversation about golfing legends is Doug Ford. Few people would have any idea that Ford won the 1957 Masters. Before he died in 2018, he never won another green jacket and he hadn't made the cut since 1971 (four years before Tiger Woods was born). Yet, he was invited to play in the Masters every year. The Masters' rules include a lifetime invitation to every champion of the event. Ford only won the tournament once, hadn't qualified with his golf skills in over four decades, and didn't break par in the event since 1958. Nonetheless, he got to play in the tournament every year because on one single occasion he won.
- H. Our salvation and everlasting life is similarly linked to a **single event**. Christ's work on the cross was a one shot deal. He died once so that all could live eternally. He rose once for all!

- I. Our message this morning is entitled Once for All.
- J. Paul continued his letter to the Roman Christians by telling them that they aren't stuck in sin and death...but because of Jesus' once-for-all death and resurrection, they're free from sin and death, and invited to be living in grace and right relationship with God.
- K. Doug Ford may have been invited to the Masters every year because of one tournament win, but we are invited to everlasting life every day, starting the day you came to faith in Christ, because of Jesus' once for all win on Easter!
- L. Let's pray and see what that means for us today...

M. PRAY!

- N. Grab your bible and flip with me to Romans chapter 6, starting in verse 1. Paul finished chapter 5 by saying, in verse 21, "...just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- O. Then, he asks THIS question...verse 6:1...

2. Scripture

A. READ ROMANS 6:1-4

- i. The question is fairly simple. Paul said, "Hey, since God reaches down while we are sinners and rescues us (which is an awesome thing), shouldn't we then keep sinning like crazy so that God can reach down even MORE and rescue us! I mean, the more grace the better, right? If grace comes when I sin, if I sin like mad, then I'll get more grace."
- ii. Of course, this question isn't a real question, but a rhetorical one. To which, he answers, OF COURSE NOT! "By no means!"
- iii. He then goes back to the death to life pathway that he talked about in chapter 5...a pathway that God has built for humanity. If a person has died to sin, they've switched to the life highway, and can't go on living IN sin, which means that if a follower of Jesus KNOWS something is sinful, according to the Word of God, that person will actively seek to STOP.
- iv. If you leave Las Vegas because you know you had a gambling problem from which God freed you, you wouldn't go BACK to Vegas to gamble unless you hadn't truly found freedom from gambling addiction. Once you are free to leave it behind, you can't go back to gambling.
- v. And maybe on your way out of town, you look in the rearview mirror and say to God, "Strike me down if I ever try to go back!"
- vi. For Paul, making the transition from sin's way to God's way of life means dying to the sin and receiving the life apart from the sin.

- vii. For Christians, the public marker (vow) we make to God and the church, and ourselves, like the vow in the rearview mirror as you leave Vegas, is **baptism**.
 - a. Baptism is a turning point. Baptism is a marker. Baptism is a gracious gift! Baptism is the end of one thing and the beginning of another. Baptism is a doorway to the new things God has for you.
 - b. For Paul, baptism was critical because baptism is what marks people as Christians. And, says Paul, **baptism** is a powerful reminder that we **die to our sin and rise to newness of life**.
 - c. Just as Jesus died on the cross to pay the full price for sin, and went into the grave because of it, WE TOO, when we are baptized, go down into the grave (go UNDER the water) as one person, and come out of the grave (UP OUT of the WATER) with new life in the church!
 - d. And just as Jesus rose from the grave, which was the place our sin died with him, so WE rise from our old ways and are made new as we rise with him.
- viii. Paul starts with the question of whether or not we should go on sinning so that grace will abound even more...and says, definitively, NO!
- ix. See, because this isn't about what we DO or DON'T DO, really. It's about our STATUS as those who have been raised with Christ. Those who are alive in Christ can't go back to a life of sin...because you've died to it!
- x. Yet, from there, we DO WALK in newness of life. So, not only do we have a status of having died to sin, and risen again, but we start walking in a brand new way, every day. (Man, I wish I could walk around right now to illustrate that!)
- xi. Paul goes on in verse 5 to explain more about what he means...

B. READ ROMANS 6:5-11

- i. What Christ has done, we do.
- ii. I love to watch videos of people jumping out of airplanes. Someday, I hope to jump out of an airplane. On purpose...I want to do that on purpose!
- iii. My favorite skydiving videos are those of people that jump for the first time...and they always have an experienced skydiver strapped to their back.
- iv. From the moment they prepare to jump, they have to do the same things. Prepare to jump, jump, free fall through the air...and if they want to land safely, when the parachute is deployed, they hang from it together as they float to earth together. The student can't do his or her own thing...what one does, they both do.

- v. Paul was telling the church that they are connected to Christ by faith...and what Christ has done, they do.
- vi. They were **co-buried with Christ**...which took the punishment for their sin.
- vii. They were **co-raised with Christ**...which gave them the newness of life in which they walk.
- viii. See, they weren't just freed from sin so they could be rid of the slavery to it. They were co-buried with Christ so they could be co-raised with Him...SO THAT they could walk in newness...so they could fully embrace the status of being redeemed.
- ix. The cross of Jesus only makes full sense because of the empty tomb of Jesus!
- x. And...because Jesus isn't going back into the grave EVER...WE never have to go back into sin and death, EVER! And because Jesus will never rise again from the grave, we will be alive forever more WITH HIM!
- xi. He did those two things ONCE FOR ALL.
 - a. The Greek word for this phrase is ephapax - which means one time, all at once, or once for all. It has the sense that **whatever it is, it's done never to be redone.**
 - b. Jesus died ephapax...never to die again. Jesus rose ephapax...never to rise again.
 - c. And, church, because you and I were co-buried and co-raised with him, we TOO are dead to sin ephapax...and are raised to new life ephapax...once for all!

3. Application

- A. You may not play in the Masters Golf Tournament...and you may never willingly jump out of an airplane, but you, right now, as a follower of Jesus who has been co-buried and co-raised once for all, get to live into the status of having been buried and raised to new life.
- B. Verse 11 gave this charge to the Roman Christians...and is for you today: "So you also **must** consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."
- C. N. T. Wright said, "There is no room here for the idea that the Messiah, or more especially his people, still lives with a foot in both camps, or with one foot in the grave and the other by the empty tomb. Jesus, the Messiah, died once and once only, and was thereafter finished with death." NIV Commentary, page 541.

D. So, here's your charge from Paul this morning about being dead to sin and alive to God:

i. First, **Live in Your Status as Dead to Sin**

- a. When you're dead to something, it has no affect on you, except what you remember about the way it was killing you when you were there.
- b. The people of Israel were in slavery in Egypt for hundreds of years before God led them out of slavery and into the wilderness and eventually to the Promised Land. After they left, they were dead to Egypt...dead to slavery. They never had to go back, even though they were tempted to because it's what they knew...and even though it was slavery, they were more comfortable there than trusting in God for provision. They had to learn to live in their new status as FREE...as dead to slavery.
- c. If you've put your trust and faith in Jesus' saving, forgiving power through his death on the cross, you're free! You aren't in Egypt or Vegas or death any longer! Live into that status.
- d. Don't keep going back to Vegas. Don't keep giving in to temptation to sin. You've been taken FROM the place of sin and you don't have to go back, ever. The Holy Spirit gives you POWER to be free from it!
- e. Get some accountability partners around you to help you. Be honest with yourself and with trusted Christians women and men...or just one man or one woman. Confess your struggles and ask for full accountability. It's uncomfortable and it's vulnerable, but it's the pathway from slavery to sin to the promised land and newness of life.
- f. And let humility reign in you because of your sin...the sin that sent Jesus to the cross, willingly, for you. He paid the price ephapax...once for all...once for YOU.
- g. Once for all, you can live into the status as dead to sin.

E. Then, **Live in Your Status as Alive with Christ**

- i. If you agree to be buried with Christ, freeing you from the status as 'dead in your sin', then you MUST MUST accept the status as being ALIVE - having newness of life.
- ii. You are co-buried AND CO-RAISED with Jesus. You don't get to JUST be co-buried, thus enjoying the freedom without the calling.
- iii. Being co-raised is, then, all about MISSION! Being co-raised is WALKING into the world with Jesus, in this life of freedom and newness of life!
- iv. The Hebrew word for walk is *halak* which has the full sense of **conduct**. Those who are walking (halakah) are doing what the master is doing. They are walking in the footsteps of the One whom they are following.

- v. In this case, that means living, alive, in the ONE MAN, Christ, and doing what Christ did - forgiving sin, healing, serving, loving, washing feet, DYING and being RAISED to new life! Praying, teaching, challenging...
- vi. Walking is conduct that follows from the status of being co-raised.
- vii. Keep discovering what God is calling you to do. Being a follower of Jesus, after having been co-raised with Jesus means that you get to work for Him.
- viii. It's not too strong for me to say that Jesus wants EVERY SINGLE LAST PART OF YOUR LIFE, without excuses and without hesitation.
- ix. And that may seem like a lot to ask. Yet, is it more that ask than what the Father asked Jesus to do? Is it more than going to the cross? Is it more than going into a cold tomb? No way!
- x. Pray right now, "Jesus, what more can I give you? What things am I not giving to you? My time? My finances? My family? My work? My gifts? My thoughts? My heart?"
- xi. Every single one of us has more to allow Jesus to use for His glory and our own good.
- xii. Live in Your Status as Alive with Christ...he wants to use everything you have for His kingdom...so that others will know Him along with you.

4. Conclusion

- A. Doug Ford had a shot and he won...and for the rest of his life, he made a go of competing at the Masters. He didn't win...but he was there.
- B. JESUS WINS EVERY TIME for you...for your sin, and for your life.
- C. Jesus died, once for all. Jesus rose again, once for all.
- D. We are part of the ALL that has received our status as dead to sin and alive to God because we are co-heirs with Jesus.
- E. Jesus is calling to us today, saying, "Give me your sins and never look back. Take my hand as you walk with me, church, so that the world will know that I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE."
- F. Wherever we identify sin, that's the place where we are called to engage - racism, greed, abuse, apathy. Jesus has a plan there...and part of that is to use US to put sin to death.
- G. The other part of the plan is for us to offer grace-filled, abundant **life** as we walk with our community...our families...our seniors...our friends and neighbors...those who we know and those we don't...online and in person!
- H. It'll cost us...but it's part of the everything that we offer, **once for all**.
- I. Let's PRAY!