

Title: Come Alive – Power to Change
Date: April 1, 2018
Subject: Jesus’ resurrection brings power to change people
Scripture:

Prelude Gloria and Katie Easter Medley

Video Come Alive With Jesus

Scripture -- Jesus, the Lamb of God, worthy of our honor and praise. Jesus...despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering. He took up our infirmities, carried our sorrows, was punished by God, afflicted, oppressed, pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him. The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all, bearing our sins that we might be free from sin, dying that we might live forever (Isaiah 53:3-6). “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:9, 10). “Yet to all who receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gives the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

Choir -- Cornerstone

Worship through singing -- 99 Christ the Lord is Risen Today

100 Christ Arose

Family time

Prayer

Worship through giving

Offertory – Gloria and Jean A Mighty Fortress is Our God

Scripture -- For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate”...For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (1 Corinthians 1:18, 19, 25).

Tom & Linda – God’s Own Fool

Reading -- Consider the contrast as Christ leaves the splendor of heaven for a lowly birth in a cattle stall. Consider the contrast between the signs, wonders and miracles with the hours of loneliness and the utter despair as He prayed alone in the garden. Consider the hands which raised Lazarus from the dead have become nail-pierced. Consider His perfect heart as it becomes bruised and shattered from great sorrow, and broken further with the awful weight of sin he carries once for all people for all time. Consider the message of the cross. The cross of pain and suffering, stained crimson from the blood that flowed for the forgiveness of our sins, becomes the wonderful cross, the cross that calls to us across the gulf of time, bids us to come, and to give him our all. Consider the cross.

Choir – Love Ran Red

Worship through singing -- 117 Crown Him With Many Crowns

Message

The teacher brought empty plastic eggs for each member of her class. Since it was a nice spring day they went outside to search for something that symbolized new life. The third graders combed the church property to find something to put in their eggs. Back inside the kids crowded around as the teacher opened them. The kids oohed and aahed – a flower, a blade of grass, a fresh green leaf, a butterfly and one egg that had nothing in it. The kids laughed. “Someone didn’t do the assignment.” Philip quickly spoke up, “That one’s mine.” “You didn’t do it right.” “I did too.” “No, you didn’t. You were supposed to put something in your egg.” “I did do it. It’s empty. The tomb was empty!”

The tomb is empty. Today we celebrate the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Two thousand years ago God’s plan of redemption altered the world forever. All hope seemed to have drained from mankind as we looked for the hero to ride in and save the day. That’s what Jesus did, at just the right time.

The Son of God came to earth to take on a human nature and live among us, to show us how to live, to show us how to have a relationship with God. After living 33 sinless years, he took our sins upon Himself and died for us on a cross. That was on a Friday. As S. M. Lockridge put it, “It’s Friday, but Sunday’s a coming.” Jesus rose from the dead, defeating the power sin and death had over us. True life, spiritual life, God’s life triumphed. We can come alive to His power to give life and transform each one of us into a new creation.

The good news today is that we don’t have the power to become a new creation. There was and is nothing within us that could affect such a change. The Bible tells us, “We were dead because of our sins and because our sinful nature” (Colossians 2:13). Dead people can’t give life to themselves.

The same verse tells something remarkable happened. “Then God made us alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins” (Colossians 2:13). As a result of the resurrection every person who has received Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior has the power of God within them which brings about new life.

“He forgave all our sins.” One of the ways sin is defined is with an archery term. Sin means missing the target. But it’s more than that. It means to turn our backs and shoot in every direction except for the target. We completely ignore the true target of pleasing God and we set our sights on seductive targets that don’t save us or satisfy us. Instead, they make us feel miserable and empty.

More good news. God offers complete forgiveness. He cancels every record of the charges. He doesn’t hold them against us and demand punishment from us for them. Jesus didn’t come to rub our noses in our sins. He came to rub them out like a cosmic Etch-A-Sketch. All the stuff that darkened the screen of our lives is gone. The Bible says Jesus takes all of the sins in our lives and wipes us clean. That happens the moment we trust Him alone to be our Savior. He didn’t come to condemn us; He came to change us by saving us from our sins.

I heard of five people who were translating the Bible into the language of a people group who didn’t have access to it in their language. Some religious extremists from the majority religion broke in and began shooting. They killed four of the people. The leader survived as the other four covered him with their bodies.

Jesus covered us with his body to save us from God’s punishment that we rightly deserved. He took our punishment. Jesus gave his life so that we could live.

The good news of Easter is that Jesus Christ not only died for our sins and offers us forgiveness, but that same power that raised Him from the dead two thousand years ago is available today to change our lives right now, to enable us to live the transformed lives Jesus is calling us to live. Jesus not only saves us by His death, but he also saves us by His life. A risen Jesus lives inside of us by His Holy Spirit. His divinity inhabits our humanity. Think of the reality of having a risen Jesus living His life out through our lives.

Sometimes we think, “I don’t know if I have the power to change my attitude or my outlook on life. I don’t know if I have the ability to break this addiction. I don’t know if I can truly forgive this person who’s hurt me. I don’t have the power to love my enemies. I don’t have the power to live the life Jesus is calling me to live.”

So many people walk through life carrying the burden of their past failures and their past sins. They live in a constant state of regret. They’re tortured by painful memories. They can’t seem to let go of their past, and as a result they let their past control their present and dictate their future. They wish they could hit the delete button and start over.

There are plenty of messages coming from the world system opposed to God that tell us who we are. But here's the truth: We are who God says we are, and no else gets to have a say in the matter. Because of the power of the resurrection, we are now identified with Christ and we have the power of the Holy Spirit within us. He has given us a new identity.

When we're a child of God, we aren't defined by our feelings. We're not defined by the opinions of others or by our circumstances. We're not defined by our successes and failures. We're not defined by the car we drive, the money we make, or the house we own. We're defined by God and God alone—and He identifies us – you and me-- as His own.

The Apostle Paul knew the beginning of his spiritual life depended on Jesus and the power of the resurrection. And he knew there was more in store. The goal of Paul's life was to know Jesus and to know the power of His resurrection in his everyday life. Paul was dependent on Jesus and His power living through him.

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead gives Him the ability and authority to rule over the universe is available to you and me now (Ephesians 1:19-20). The power of a risen Christ through His Holy Spirit in our lives sustains us through the unpredictability of life's twists and turns, roadblocks, and even those life-altering dead ends.

One minute we feel like we're sailing along and everything is going fine, and the next moment we're dealing with a crisis. Life is full of stress, heartache, disappointments, setbacks, trials, and tragedies. He carries us with His grace and power. That means we can face each day, each challenge in the strength of a risen Savior. Regardless of what happens to us, whatever difficulties we might face, whatever curveball life may throw at us, we have the power to stand and withstand.

The Bible tells us we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us. Nothing, “neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation” —not trouble or hardship or danger—can separate us from the love of Jesus! (Romans 8:38–39).

We serve a resurrected Savior who exerted power to conquer death. He still operates in resurrection power and He promises to fill us with that same power. Because He is alive, He gives us the power to change. He gives the power and ability to get started in the relationship with him, and He'll give us the power to keep going, to give us strength to face the challenges of each day as we trust in him and lean into him.

We can't do it alone. We can't do it in our own strength. We don't have the power to do it on our own. We were made to depend on Jesus.

Some of us feel like a failure, a loser, or a has-been. Maybe our identity is wrapped up in what we've done or what has been done to us. God offers the chance to have a new identity. He wants to bring us into His family and give us a new title—an accepted, forgiven, loved child of God.

Some of us feel powerless over the challenges we face. God offers the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to give us peace, strength, the ability to face those issues head-on. It's the power to change our situation, or at least how we work through the situation as we seek to see what God is attempting to do in it.

The resurrection means that no situation is too hopeless! No problem is too big for Jesus! He's still in the resurrection business—and He has the power to change our lives!

Scripture – “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins...The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ -- it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:1; Romans 6:23; 5:8; Ephesians 2:4, 5).

Choir -- Because He Lives, Amen

Reading – The Easter story moves from glory to glory. Three days in the borrowed tomb, in the early morning hours of Sunday, the heart of heaven in our Savior began to beat again. Life returned. Death is forever defeated. As if His great love for us that he would take our punishment on the cross were not enough to leave us forever amazed, He rose from the dead as the first to conquer death. His victory assures ours. We can know him and live with him forever. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Worship through singing Before the Throne of God Above

Prayer

Postlude Christ the Lord is Risen Today/Hallelujah Chorus