

## Resurrection Stories: Practicing Resurrection

Ephesians 1:15-23 || Pastor Matt Trexler || 16 May 2021

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,  
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.  
– CG Mission Statement*

---

**Icebreaker:** What is something you collect (or collected when you were younger)?

**Worship:** [Ephesians 1:3-6](#) (Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?)

---

**Sermon Summary for [Ephesians 1:15-23](#)** (Read the passage aloud before reading the sermon summary.)

The celebration of Christ's ascension into Heaven is to celebrate that He rules with a power that makes all things new. It is the greatest news we could possibly hear, because we desperately need that power in our lives. In this passage, Paul wants us to know that we are connected to Jesus; he is praying that we would have our eyes opened to the glorious inheritance that belongs to us. But this isn't power as we normally expect it. Our desires are too weak, our eyesight too limited, and our hopes are too small to properly understand it. Because too often we focus almost exclusively on ourselves. But this is the power to live the life that God has called us to – to "shine like stars in the sky as we hold firmly to the Word of life" ([Phil 2:15-16](#)). This is a power for *this* world because two thousand years ago Jesus rose from the dead and that same power is now at work in those who believe in Him.

The Benefits of the Power of the Ascended Christ (v18-19) // *Do we really know who we are as Christians?* Most of us cannot get past the shame, hopelessness and disappointment we feel as we struggle with sin, temptation and our past. We feel stuck. But Paul is praying that our eyes would be opened to our **new identity**. Because when we come to see ourselves in Christ, we begin to understand the extraordinary value God places on every one of us. He sees His Son in us, and He is very pleased. We are His glorious inheritance and His beloved, treasured possession (Deut 7:6). We might not feel this because we do not know it... which is the very reason Paul prayed for our eyes to be opened. Because this is our *true* identity. And God knows what He is doing with our lives. He is committed to making us into the image of His Son. Christ in effect is the blueprint for our lives; that is the new horizon for our lives. And this isn't some impossible mountain to climb, nor is it wishful thinking. It is a sure and certain hope because every believer has the Spirit of Christ in them ([Phil 1:6](#)).

The Source of the Power of the Ascended Christ (v19-21) // Jesus is seated at God's right hand, and from there, He pours out His Spirit and His resurrection power to His people. This can seem too big, too good to be true. Or at least it feels like hope for some far off future. But this is hope for our world, now. Because two thousand years ago, Jesus was raised from the dead. And what God did for Jesus, He is going to do for the whole world ([Rom 4:17-18](#)). God is actively working to make all things new. We know this because He has given His Spirit as the guarantee of our inheritance. Paul prays that we would know this power that raised Jesus from the dead. Death, the one enemy no one has ever been able to overcome, has been defeated. When Christ came out of that grave, we who were once dead were also made alive with Him. Even now, we are seated with Him in the heavenly places ([Eph 2:5-7](#)). That Spirit is within us; it is a sure and certain hope. What God starts, God completes. This is the foundation of our lives.

The Location of the Power of the Ascended Christ (v22) // Where is all this happening? What are the signs that God is at work? Where is the evidence that Jesus is reigning? Paul says there is a specific place where this power is made manifest: the church. Whatever our experiences or feelings are of the church, the truth remains that it is the bride of Christ, and it is where God's power is. In the church, people are getting baptized, moving from death to life. In the church, the power of evil is being broken and new life is happening. Of course, the church has been the place of evil things too, because it's a battleground. The church has always been half put together and half falling apart, but that's where God has chosen to work. We can't do the Christian life on our own; we need to be in the place where God has promised to pour all His resources into.

---

**Discussion Questions** (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

**The Benefits of the Power of the Ascended Christ (vv 15-18)**

- What are the specific things Paul is praying for and for whom?
  - Which would you pray for yourself? For someone else?
- Why is the knowledge of God so important to believers?
  - Who or what is the source of wisdom and revelation which leads to this knowledge?
- What is God's glorious inheritance in the saints?
  - How would you live differently if you knew deep in your heart that God sees you and delights over you, redeeming you at great cost to be His own treasure, His beloved, His precious jewel?

**The Source of the Power of the Ascended Christ (vv 19-21)**

- How does Paul prove the immeasurable greatness of this power? Discuss the details.
  - What does Paul want us to understand about this power?
- What happened when Jesus ascended and what does that mean for every Christian?
  - Is this power available to us? Who or what is the source of this power?

**The Location of the Power of the Ascended Christ (vv 22-23)**

- Where is this power made manifest now?
  - How does the fact that Jesus is not only head of the church but also the One responsible to hold her together encourage you?
  - How have you seen Jesus at work recently?
- How would you like to have "the eyes of your heart enlightened" about the power of God's Spirit within us?
  - Make a plan as a group to help one another get to know Him better this summer.

---

**Prayer** Pray for one another using the prayer of Ephesians 1:15-23.

**Engage & Experience: Generous Hospitality**

*"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Luke 10:27). Imagine if every Christian interpreted what Jesus said as the most important thing to do and actually did it. Imagine if every person made decisions about their schedules to make good neighboring a priority. There is so much potential. The world really could be changed.*

The Art of Neighboring, page 180

Being a good neighbor is not an evangelism strategy. If evangelism is your motive you will not be a good neighbor, however if neighboring is done with the right posture, then people who don't know God will come to know Him. The agenda we must drop is the well-meaning tendency to be friends with people for the sole purpose of converting them to our faith. It's tempting to offer friendship with this string attached. We don't love our neighbors to convert them; we love our neighbors because we are converted. We are called to love people - without expecting anything in return. When people are in relationships with others, they naturally share what they love. If you love Jesus, he will naturally come up in your conversations.

- Discuss the tension in this statement, "We don't love our neighbors to convert them; we love our neighbors because we are converted."
- Share something that you have done for or with a neighbor that seemed small at the time but had a large impact.
- Please share some of your neighboring stories with us! Email them to [community@pacificcrossroads.org](mailto:community@pacificcrossroads.org).