

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: A Demonstration of the Unmatched Greatness of God's Power

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Preacher: Fred Stone

[0 : 00] powerful military force that is ready and able to defend us if we are attacked or if there's any kind of warlike crisis. As individuals, we have education, technology, medicine, talented people to provide us with at least some power to face almost any crisis. But in the face of this coronavirus emergency, many people, many Americans have felt powerless. You may have. Sometimes I do.

And it's frustrating, isn't it? It's discouraging. Well, I have some good news this morning. On this Easter Sunday morning, I want us to understand that God is in full control of everything. He is in full control of this universe. God clearly demonstrated the unmatched greatness of His power when He raised Jesus from the dead on that first Easter Sunday morning. It was a tremendous demonstration of the mighty power of God. And I want you to listen to this. Take this to heart. God has made this same great power available to us, you and me, as His people. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul prays for Christians to have both a knowledge of and experience with God's power. That's what we're going to look at this morning.

I want to invite you to open your Bible to Ephesians chapter 1. We're going to look at verses 16 through 23, where Paul tells us about what and how he has prayed for these Christians. When we get to verse 19, it just seems like Paul gets excited as he prays for them to experience God's power. And the reason I say that is you look at verse 19, he just goes all out to emphasize the greatness of God's power. Let's look at Ephesians chapter 1, beginning in verse 16. I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you. What are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints?

Now, let's pay close attention to how Paul describes God's power beginning in the next verse, verse 19. And what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might, that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The goal for us today as we look at this passage is the same as God's goal for the Ephesians, to make sure that we have knowledge of and experience with God's great power.

[4 : 15] The first thing I want us to consider is a question. Can you point to evidence of the unmatched greatness of God's power?

In other words, can you point to evidence of God's power in action? Somewhere in history, in life, can you point to evidence of God's great power?

Well, Paul points out two powerful demonstrations that every Christian should be familiar with. Let's look at it again. Number one, He raised Jesus from the dead.

That's the great demonstration of God's power that He is focusing on, that He's excited about, and that we need to be excited about this morning. Look at the verses again, verses 19 and 20.

The immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might, that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

[5 : 23] When God the Father raised the Son from the dead, it was the greatest demonstration of power in all of history. Now think about it with me.

You know, most of you, if you're a Bible reader, there are a handful or so places in the Bible where someone was brought back from the dead.

Three weeks ago, we looked at a passage in John chapter 11 where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Now, what I want us to understand when Jesus raised Lazarus and all the other times that someone was raised to life, what the Scripture is describing is someone coming back to life in the same body, the same person, condition that they were previously in.

It was really a restoration of the earthly life of the person who was raised. For example, Lazarus. He died again.

Every person that you read about other than Jesus, people who died and Jesus or one of the prophets or one of the apostles brought them back to life, they died again.

[6 : 45] And they were buried. And their body is in a grave somewhere in this world right now. But the resurrection of Jesus is totally different.

When God raised Jesus on that Sunday morning, Jesus had a new, glorified, resurrected body that will never experience pain, suffering, or death again.

You know, that's the kind of body that we as Christians will receive one day when Jesus comes back to this earth. We will receive a new, resurrected, glorified body that will never suffer any kind of disease, experience a crisis, never die again.

Think about this new body. Think about it in terms of Jesus' new body. After Jesus arose from the grave, people saw Him.

They touched Him. They heard Him speak. Some people even saw Jesus cook fish over an open fire.

[7 : 59] They saw Him eat. Jesus appeared in bodily form to over 500 people in different locations over a period of 40 days.

And His appearance, His presence, His power made a difference in the lives of His disciples. After His disciples saw Him, the resurrected Jesus, and later were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were just radically changed.

Before His death and resurrection, they deserted Him. They ran away. They were cowards. But after the resurrection, they boldly and publicly declared that Jesus Christ is the risen Lord and Savior of all who will believe in Him.

Many of those disciples, tradition tells us, died by execution because they would not renounce their faith.

They would not in any way compromise their commitment to the risen Lord Jesus Christ. God demonstrated His power by raising Jesus from the dead.

[9 : 23] But that's not all. That's not where He stopped. We also see that He exalted Jesus to His right hand. Look back again. Those same scriptures.

The immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might, that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

The exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of the Father is also a tremendous demonstration of God's power.

It also demonstrates the power and the authority of Jesus as He is seated in that place of authority and power there at God's right hand.

I want you to look at verses 21 and 22 because they describe this authority and power that Jesus now possesses. And seated Him in His right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come.

[10 : 40] And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church. Jesus Christ is alive right now. He's at the Father's right hand.

He rules over everything now. And He will forever. We saw last week from Romans chapter 8 and verse 31 that something else Jesus is doing right now, He's interceding for us.

He's praying for us. He's there representing us before the Father. He's there on our behalf. He is for us.

And then one day, one day Jesus is going to leave that position at the Father's right hand to return to this world in what will be at that time the greatest demonstration of power and authority that the world has ever seen.

Jesus will come back to this world one day. Now let me ask you, do you know, do you have absolute confidence that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, that He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and that all this was done by God's mighty power?

[12:05] Do you know that? Are you truly worshiping and praising and talking to your living Lord this morning?

This past week, someone sent me an article about Dabo Swinney where he was making some comments about the coronavirus, but he also talked about his faith in Jesus Christ. He was talking about this special time of year about the resurrection and about Easter. He said one thing that helps us see something about the greatness of God's power.

I want to quote Dabo. He said, over 2,000 years ago, we had a major world crisis going on. God took something that was evil and turned it into eternal good.

He was talking about the death of God's Son. The death of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross was the worst act of evil that's ever taken place in the history of the world.

[13:17] But what we need to understand is that God had determined beforehand to use it to bring about the greatest good in the history of the world.

The salvation of all who will come to Him through faith in Jesus. I want to ask you, do you have a real relationship with the risen and exalted Lord Jesus Christ?

Think about it. Do you know Him? Do you talk to Him? Do you listen to Him? Do you love Him? Do you worship Him?

Is He really your Lord and your God? Do you serve Him? Do you seek to please Him? That's what we do in a relationship with Him if we have one.

If you don't have that kind of relationship, I want to encourage you to come to Him right now. There is absolutely no better time to come to Christ in faith than Easter Sunday.

[14:28] I want to encourage you. Turn from your sin. Repent. Change your mind. Put your faith in Jesus that when He died on the cross, He was paying the penalty for your sin.

Surrender your life to Him. Honor Him as your King and your Lord. The Scripture tells us very clearly, plainly, that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

And I want to encourage you to do that if you've never done so, if you're not truly one with Christ. It is vitally important this morning that we understand the greatness of God's power, but knowledge is not enough.

We need to experience it. Here's the second question, second major question. Can you point to your personal experience of the unmatched greatness of God's power?

In other words, how have you experienced God's power in your life? Do you realize that the power of God, the power that God makes available to us is the same power that He exerted when He brought Jesus from the grave and exalted Him to His right hand?

[15:55] Look back at verses 19 and 20 one more time and let's look at it in the New Living Translation. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him.

this is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand.

I want to make something very clear about God's power. God makes His power available to us to accomplish His purpose not our own.

God does not give us power to go on an ego trip. God does not give us power for selfish or worldly goals. Most of you know that God's overall goal His ultimate goal is for us to become like Jesus.

That's what He's working in us every day in every situation to accomplish if we're Christians. God wants us as His children to grow spiritually and to develop Christ-like character.

[17:13] And He promises us the power to be able to do that, to succeed that. You know in the last three chapters of Ephesians, chapters 4, 5, and 6, Paul describes some of the ways that God wants to exert His power in our lives and bring about change in us.

God does not save us with the intent of leaving us as we are. When God saves us, He puts His Spirit in us and He works in us to change the way that we think, the way that we speak, the way that we live, the way that we interact with people.

I want you to look at some examples in Ephesians 4 through 6 of the kind of changes God wants to work in us through His power.

First, God will empower us to develop humility, gentleness, and patience according to chapter 4 verse 2. God works in us, enables us with the power, if we'll cooperate with Him, to develop humility, gentleness, and patience.

God gives us the power to use our spiritual gifts and talents to be a blessing to other people, to help other people, to serve in and through our church, to strengthen the ministry of our church.

[18 : 50] Are you using your gifts that way? Number three, God will give us the power we need to get rid of ungodly behaviors, things like sexual immorality, greed, lying, anger, rage, even alcohol abuse.

We find this in Ephesians chapter 4 verses 25 through chapter 5 verse 18. And these are just some of the behaviors, sinful behaviors, that God will empower us to overcome.

Number four, God will empower us to live godly lives in our homes and develop healthy family relationships.

There's an extensive passage, Ephesians 5 verse 22 through chapter 6 verse 9, where Paul specifically addresses wives, husbands, fathers, parents, children.

God wants our homes to be healthy. He wants the relationships in our home to be loving. He has given us instructions on what we need to do, the mindset, the lifestyle we need to be involved in in order to make this happen.

[20 : 16] It's not easy. It's not easy living with other people, is it? But God will give us the power over time to gradually grow and become loving husbands and wives and parents and children.

Let's look at one more. God gives us the power to resist temptation and overcome the evil power and influence of the devil in any demonic force. That's in Ephesians chapter 6, specifically verse 12.

I want you to think. Everything that God calls us to be and do, he supplies us with the power, the ability to do it.

Do you really and truly believe that? Well, the answer is found in the way you are using God's power.

power. How have you responded to God's offer of power, to his indwelling spirit who provides that power?

[21 : 29] Have you responded with doubt, with denial, or maybe with delight? Let's think about it.

Have you doubted God's willingness to work powerfully in your life? Have you doubted it? Some Christians do. Some Christians really live like they are deists.

They're practical deists. They believe that God created the world. They believe that God has saved them. I'm talking about people who really and truly do not expect God to be actively involved in their life on a daily basis.

God. They believe in God. They trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior. But the way that they live, the way that they think, they really show that they do not expect God to be actively involved in the details of their life.

Let me ask you, do you expect God to work His power in your life on a regular basis, on a daily basis?

[22 : 42] Now, some people deny, let me ask you, have you denied God's willingness to work powerfully in your life?

Some Christians do that. They may not think about it in these terms, but some Christians, just as some people in general in the world, have a victim mentality.

mentality. They think that they're trapped in some kind of unhealthy or even sinful behavior, and they can never change.

Oh, they see other people have changed, but in their mind, they're different. Such things have happened. Certain people have betrayed them, hurt them, and they think they're beyond hope when it comes to change.

When a Christian thinks like that, what they're saying is they don't think God can or will work in their lives to change them. So I want to ask you, do you really believe, do you have confidence in the fact that God can change you?

[23 : 57] God can let me ask you one more question about this. Have you delighted in God's willingness to work powerfully in your life by the way that you cooperate with Him, by the way that you seek to listen to Him and obey Him?

You know, that's what we all should be doing. That's what God's goal is for us, to trust Him, that He has the power to change us, and then to obey Him as He goes about changing us through primarily

His Word and His Spirit.

You know, God works in His power in our lives in all kinds of ways, really. But the primary ways are through His Word and His Spirit.

You know, God's Word, the Bible that you have, provides us with everything that we need in terms of what we should believe and how we should live as people who are children of God, who want to please God.

So let me ask you, are you reading that Word regularly? Are you obeying what you read faithfully?

[25 : 19] God's Spirit gives us the desire and the ability to obey God's Word and to please God in the process. We have that desire. We have the responsibility as Christians, indwelt by the Spirit of God, that's our real power source, He is our real power source, we have the responsibility to be sensitive to His presence, and then obedient to His leadership.

And I want you to think, keep in mind, the Holy Spirit will teach and guide us most clearly from what He has already given us in the Scriptures that He inspired men to write.

And we can always be sure that He will never, the Spirit will never lead us to do something that is contrary to Scripture. before World War II, there was a small town in Texas where a school fire broke out and took the lives of 263 children.

Now, as you can imagine, in a small town, just about every family was touched, broken broken by that tragedy.

Well, during the war, during World War II, there was no money, and the town was not able to rebuild their school. But after the war was over, the town did rebuild, and they never forgot the fire.

[27 : 03] They were able to build a new school that featured what they called the finest sprinkler system in the world because they were determined a tragedy like that would never happen again.

Well, in the post-World War II era, towns boomed, and this little town had a lot of growth to the point that seven years after the school was built, they had to expand the school.

When they began adding a new wing, they discovered something that just floored them, shocked them, they could not believe.

Their world-class sprinkler system had never been connected to the water line. Can you imagine that? A town, a group of people who were so concerned for the welfare of their children that they overlooked hooking up that sprinkler system to the water line.

That is a parable of how many Christians fail to hook up to, be sensitive to, and obedient to the Spirit of God, their source of power who indwells them.

[28 : 35] A lot of times we fail to utilize God's awesome power that He demonstrated by raising Jesus and seating Him at His right hand.

That's the kind of power that a lot of times we ignore, that we waste. I want you to understand on this Easter Sunday, God in demonstrating His power by bringing Jesus back from the grave, exalting Him to His right hand.

God wants to use that same power in your life. He wants to use it in a way in you and through you that will first of all bring glory to Himself.

That will truly be a blessing to other people. And as you glorify God and bless other people, you're going to find that you're experiencing a lot of joy and satisfaction.

It's going to be just a byproduct for you. I want to encourage you. Think about this power.

[29 : 46] It's available to you. But do you want to experience? Do you want to experience God's power in your life to shape and mold you into the likeness of His Son?

If you do, trust Him. Obey Him. And be prepared to experience His awesome power in your life every day.

Let's pray together. Father, we are people who are powerless on our own. When it comes to pleasing you and living the life that you've called us to live.

But Lord, we thank you that you have supplied what we don't have. Your great power. Help us, Father, to desire it.

Help us, Father, to seek it. And Father, as you speak through your word and your spirit, help us to pay attention. Help us to listen to you.

[30 : 59] Help us to obey you. Help us to discipline ourselves to listen and obey day by day, situation by situation.

Father, on this Easter Sunday, we are so thankful for the way you demonstrated your power in raising Jesus from the dead.

Asking Jesus from the dead. We are so thankful for you. Making Jesus from the dead. Exalting Him to your right hand and promising to send Him back to this world one day where you will make everything right and perfect.

But Lord, help us to not end this day with just knowledge of your power or even an appreciation of your power.

Help us, Father, to experience it by living lives that are sensitive to and obedient to your indwelling spirit.

[31 : 58] Help us, Father, to truly be consciously aware of your presence and trust you and obey you, even in the little details of our lives.

Thank you for this promise of power. Help us, Father, to truly experience it every day. And it's in Jesus' name we come. Amen.