

Declared to be the Son of God with Power – Rom 1:1-4

Introduction – The resurrection of Jesus Christ, celebrated annually on Resurrection Sunday, is the center of powerful Christian living. The resurrection proved something about Jesus and proved something about the powerful work of God. Fine and good. But for those in Christ, the resurrection proves something about us and about the powerful work of God in us.

What the Bondservant Proclaimed – Paul is proclaiming God's gospel, not his own ideas, for he writes as a bondservant and a called apostle (v1). This gospel is not a New Testament thing either; it was promised before through the prophets (v2). The gospel is concerning the Son of God, Jesus (literally, Yahweh saves) Christ (literally, the anointed) who was promised to come from the seed of David according to the flesh (v3). His resurrection from the dead declared this Jesus to be the Son of God, proving His divinity and divine power (v4).

The Gospel in Romans – Upon this foundation, Paul teaches that God did something definitively in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that fundamentally changed the world (Rom 1:16-17). All men are under the condemnation of their sin, Gentile (Rom 1) and Jew (Rom 2). All have sinned (Rom 3:23) and all men are dead in their sin (Rom 6:23a). Our only hope is life from the dead by the one Man who can give us life (Rom 3:24-26, 6:23b). This is the first resurrection, declared to you in the preaching of Jesus Christ who died and rose again.

The Power of the Gospel – “Christ is risen from the dead...” is not simply a proposition to be believed. Jesus is declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection. Consider –

Power over Death (Rom 5:17-19) – Spiritual death reigned because of Adam's sin, but all who are in Christ find that death in Adam put to death; instead, eternal life reigns. But it goes beyond life in the spirit. There will be a physical resurrection from physical death (1 Cor 15:51-57). Understood rightly, this changes the way we live now (v58).

Power over Sin (Rom 6:14) – As Wesley put it, there was a time when you were “fast bound in sin and nature's night.” But the power of the gospel has set us free from the power sin had over us. We are called to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because God is at work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure (Phil 2:12-13).

Power over Sufferings (Rom 5:1-5) – This new life in Christ is no guarantee of a trial-free life. It is a guarantee that every tribulation, every “death” leads to a resurrection. It proves to us that nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God which is ours in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:37-39). The resurrection declares a glory we cannot yet see nor do we yet experience, but is as sure to come as the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:18-25). We share a longing for this to be brought forth with the Spirit of God (v26), which brings us to another point...

Power According to the Spirit of Holiness – Returning to our central verse, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead (1:4). Paul is not ashamed of this good news for it is “*the power of God to salvation*” (1:16). The powerful Word is declared, and the Spirit brings life and power from that Word. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a power source, but the Spirit is personally powerful. Your new life, your hope for a resurrection, your ability to stand against sin and temptation, these are not from a raw power source, nor from making some new vows or resolutions. They are a result of a living union between God the Holy Spirit and you. In this union, God testifies to Himself, He convicts us of sin, He opens our eyes to eternal life, and empowers us to seize it by faith. This is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Having believed, “*you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance*” (Eph 1:13-14).

The Gospel Every Day – This means that the gospel, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, has immediate application for you today and every day. You can confess your sins and be cleansed. You can die to your selfishness and imitate Christ's love towards others. You can be renewed in the hope of God's victory and your resurrection in the midst of any trial. You can receive power by faith to live obediently. You can be saved by grace through faith.