

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor Rolly Estabillo
20 April 2014
Easter Service
Key Verse: Phil 3:10

“THE POWER TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE”

When you think about power, what comes to your mind? Your wife? Seriously, we may think about something that gives energy, something that makes things work, something that makes a difference. Like electric power. Without it we don't have lights or a sound system. This mike will be useless. I'll be just like whispering to you. But with Pastor Dave, it makes no difference. Power or no power. How about battery power? It may not be as powerful as electricity, but it is able to give energy anyway. And then there's nuclear power, solar power, etc.

But with all this power all around us, wouldn't it be better if we have a kind of power that is really long-lasting that is able to make a difference in our lives? In fact, a kind of power that can change your life? Many of the power that is available to us supplies energy to many of our modern devices like the computer, our smartphones, our iPads and tablets, cars, appliances, and what-not. Well and good. But deep inside, we know that all these external things can only make us happy for a while. Somehow, they make us forget our problems, our insecurities, our anxieties, our worries, and what-have-you. But when their power is gone, because they're artificial, we're all left to ourselves and realize we have to face life and come to grips with reality. We need a power that can last our lifetime and beyond. We need a power to overcome all the issues we're facing in our lives.

This morning, we're going to be talking about power. How do I have the power to change and how does God change my circumstances and give me the power to face the future? We all need this kind of power.

I remember the story of the new chaplain at the prison. He was nervous. He was assigned death row. He was trying to be positive when he went in to counsel the guy that was going to be executed the next day.

He said nervously, "I've really been praying for you." The guy said, "But you don't realize. Tomorrow I'm going to the electric chair." The chaplain said, "Well... more power to you."

In Philippians 3:10, the apostle Paul says, "*I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection.*" The Greek word for power is the word *dunamis*, which is the root word of "dynamite". God says, I want to give you dynamite power in your life! Paul said I want to know it. It's my personal goal. And, folks, I want you to know it. The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead about 2000 years ago is available for your life right now to change your life.

Sadly, not many people know the resurrection power of God. Even some Christians don't. Yes, they may believe in the resurrection but they don't know how the resurrection power of God can change their lives.

So, what is resurrection power? That's what I'm going to share with you this morning. Please listen carefully because it has the power to make a difference in your life.

First, Resurrection Power is

1. THE POWER TO CANCEL YOUR PAST.

That's good news. Have you ever been halfway through a project and wish you could start over? Like painting the house or whatever? A lot of times I think

people feel that way about life. They get halfway through life and just wish they could start over. We all have things we wish we hadn't done and said things we wish we hadn't said, thought things we wish we hadn't thought. We all have regrets. We all feel bad about things. We all have guilt.

Anyone of you remember the detective series "Columbo"? There was one episode wherein Johnny Cash was the bad guy.

When Columbo figures it all out and pulls the trap, Cash, when he finally admits he was the murderer says, "I'm glad I don't have to pretend any more. The guilt was killing me."

Then, I think you all heard about the ferryboat that sunk off the coast of South Korea last week. As of last night, 49 are dead, 174 were rescued, but 253 are still unaccounted for. It's a great tragedy. I read the story of one mother who is wracked with guilt because she forced her son to go with the trip when he really didn't want to go. Now, she's blaming herself for what happened to her son.

The greater tragedy is, I know a lot of people like that. They can't get on with the present and the future because they're stuck in the past. Some guilt or regret or something has tied them down. Sometimes it's something they have done in the past and it's preventing them from moving forward in life. That's not too smart. They say, "I guess I'll just have to live with this the rest of my life." And they're running around with this baggage -- emotional garbage -- trying to live life and they're wondering why they're not happy.

Colossians 2:13-14 is the good news. *"He has forgiven all our sins and canceled every record of the debt we owed. Christ has done away with it by nailing it to the cross."* This is God's pardon program. He says He nailed it all to the cross. Jesus paid for my guilt. That means I don't have to pay for it. He was

hung for my hang ups. Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross so I can quit nailing myself to the cross. He wants to forgive your past.

He says He wants to cancel every record of all debts you owe -- emotional debts, relational debts, physical debts, all your sins. Canceled. How long do you remember a bill that's been paid? I don't remember it at all. Once it's paid, I forget it. I think the point He's saying is this: Once God's forgiven it, I can forget it. That's good news!

Even if there were no such thing as a heaven or hell -- and there is -- but if there weren't it would be worth it to become a Christian just to have a clear conscience, just knowing that I am free from all those things I've done wrong. That's the good news.

Because Jesus is who He said He was, my past can be forgiven. I don't have to go carrying a load of guilt around. It's unnecessary.

Romans 8:1 (NIV) says, "*There is no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ.*" Those of you who are Baby Boomers, remember when you were growing up you had an Etch-A-Sketch? If you messed up the picture, you just flip it, shake it, turn it over. There would be a clean slate. This is God's etch-a-sketch verse in the Bible. He says, I want to wipe it clean. You can walk out of here today, knowing that every single thing you've ever done wrong up until this point is completely forgiven. That's good news. No condemnation! Jesus Christ did not come to rub it in, He came to rub it out. He said, "I didn't come to condemn the world, I came to save it." He wants to change you, to help you, give you a new beginning, a clear conscience.

Resurrection power is the power to cancel your debt. It is also

2. THE POWER TO OVERCOME YOUR PROBLEMS.

Much of life is a challenge. Especially if you're a parent! Charlie Shedd is known for his books on parenting. He said that before he had kids he used to travel across the country teaching a lecture he called 'The Ten Commandments for Raising Perfect Kids'. After he and Martha, his wife, had their first child, he changed it to "Ten Hints for Parents." After their second child, he relabeled the lecture, "A Few Tentative Suggestions for Fellow Strugglers." He said after the arrival of the third child he gave up speaking on the topic altogether.

Maturity is when you figure out that you can't figure it all out. Maturity is when you realize that you can't overcome all that life is going to send you. But you know that God can. And that's good news. I can't control everything in my life, but God can. So I want to hook up with Him and let Him control it and ask Him for help.

The number one complaint from people today is "My life is out of control." "I feel powerless to change the situation... I feel powerless to break a bad habit... I feel powerless to save a relationship... I feel powerless to get out of debt... I feel powerless to manage my time and my schedule." What you need is a power greater than yourself. You were never meant to live this life just on your own power. God wants to have a relationship with you so that you can have the power you need. In Ephesians 1:20, Paul says, *"I pray that you will begin to understand how incredibly great his power is to help those who believe him. It is that same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead."*

The same power that enabled Jesus to rise from death will help you to rise above your problems at present. The same power that God used at resurrection Sunday about 2,000 years ago can be used in your life right now. Whatever your'e going through at the moment, just trust that Jesus is walking beside you.

One of the most beautiful poems about the presence of Jesus is "Footprints in the Sand." Many of us have read this before. But many of us need to read it again. Or hear it again. We're all going through something right now. And I want you to focus on Jesus as you listen to this poem.

One night I dreamed a dream.
 As I was walking along the beach with my Lord
 Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
 For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
 One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
 I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
 I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
 especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
 there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
 "Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
 You'd walk with me all the way.
 But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
 there was only one set of footprints.
 I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
 Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
 When you saw only one set of footprints,
 It was then that I carried you."

The apostle Paul says in Philippians 4:13 (LB), "*I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power*". I want to help out, God says. No matter how hopeless your situation is. Some of you came crawling in here today. You've had a tough week! God wants to say to you, "Don't

give up." No problem is too big for God. No situation is hopeless if you'll turn it over to Him.

"I can do everything with the help of positive thinking". No, it doesn't say that. "I can do everything with the help of self-help books". Never. "I can do everything with the help of my diplomas". Nada. "*I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power*". Amen?

Finally, Resurrection Power is

3. THE POWER TO SECURE YOUR FUTURE

One of the universal problems we've all got is death. Everybody dies. I'm going to die someday and so are you. Only a fool would go all through life unprepared for something he knows is inevitable. That doesn't make sense. Sometimes we get so busy in the here and now we don't stop to think about what's going to come.

People don't like to talk about death. Invite your friends over some time, serve them some coffee and pie and say, "Let's talk about death. It's inevitable so let's talk about it." See what happens.

They asked some children to write sentences about what they believed about death. Gilda, age 8, said, "When you die they put you in a box and bury you in the ground because you don't look too good." Stephanie, aged 9, said, "Doctors help you so you won't die until you pay their bill." Marsha, aged 9, said, "When you die, you don't have to do homework in heaven unless your teacher is there, too." Raymond, aged 10, said, "A good doctor can help you so you won't die. A bad doctor sends you to heaven."

The fact is everybody has a deep internal longing to know, "What's going to happen? What's going to happen after I die?" It's obvious we're going to spend more time on that side of eternity than on this side. Here we only spend 60, 70,

maybe 80 years. This is just the first inch of the yardstick. This is preschool for what's going to happen in eternity. It is interesting to me that when people approach middle age, all of a sudden, they're interested in the Hereafter. U.S. News & World Report had a story a number of years ago on the cover: "The Rekindling of Hell." More people believe in heaven and hell than ever before in American history. Why? Because people are wondering, "What's going to happen?" With all the tragedies, natural disasters occurring around the world almost daily like the super typhoon in the Philippines, the missing airplane, the ferryboat sinking, people are beginning to become acutely aware of their mortality and wonder, "Is there heaven and hell?"

The fact is there are a lot of misconceptions about heaven. Most of them come from bad movies. The movies can be good but the theology in them is bad.

Heaven Can Wait, Oh, God, All Dogs Go to Heaven, -- they are cute little ideas of what they think heaven is going to be like.

But there is one movie and it's now showing that tells the true story of a 4-year old boy who went to heaven and came back. Let's watch the trailer.

VIDEO: HEAVEN IS FOR REAL

I highly recommend this movie.

So, what is heaven really going to be like? When you go to the Bible, what does God say it's really going to be like in heaven?

1) Heaven is a perfect place. Total love, total peace, total joy, perfection. No death, sin, no mistakes, no evil, no bad, no errors. It's perfect in every area. It's a perfect place. The Bible says in Revelation 21:3a-4 (NIV), the last book of the Bible, *"God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."*

2) In order for you to go there you have to be perfect because only perfect can get into heaven. That would leave us all out -- we'd never make it if we had to be perfect. None of us are perfect, we've all messed up.

There are two ways the Bible says you can get to heaven. Plan A is to earn it. That's the performance plan. To earn it you only have to never sin and always do what's right for your entire lifetime. Always make the right decision, always say the right thing, never the wrong thing, be perfect.

Since none of us qualify for Plan A, God came up with Plan B. Plan B is: you trust Jesus Christ, you establish a relationship to Him when He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." He was the only perfect person who ever lived because He was God. He came so we could know what God is like. By trusting and establishing a relationship with Him you get in on His goodness.

Ron Dunn took his young son to a carnival one time for his birthday. His son picked six boys to go with him so he bought a roll of tickets. Whenever they came to a ride, he'd pull off seven tickets and give one to each of the boys. He said they got to the Ferris Wheel and he was pulling off one for each kid and there was an eighth little kid there with his hand out. "Who are you?" The boy said, "I'm Johnny. I'm your son's new friend. And he said that you would give me a ticket." Did Ron give him one? Absolutely.

When you get to heaven you'll say, "God, I couldn't get here on my own effort. The only way I can get into heaven is I'm a friend of Jesus Christ. I have a relationship with him."

John 17:3 "*Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*" The Bible says that Jesus has already paid for your way to heaven. This is good news.

The Christian is not somebody who accepts a religion. A Christian is somebody who has a relationship to God. I'm not talking about a religion, I'm talking about a relationship to God.

A lot of people try different ways to get to heaven. Some people try Salvation by Sincerity. "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you're sincere." Just think that one through. You can be sincerely wrong. I read about a pilot who sincerely flew into a mountain. He thought it was lower. He killed himself.

He was sincerely wrong. I could pick up a glass of water and take a drink of it sincerely thinking it's water and if it's poisoned, I'd be sincerely dead.

What is your source of hope? Hope means confidence in the Bible.

- 1) Would you like to have every sin, everything you've ever done wrong completely forgiven? Would you like to have a clear conscience?
- 2) Would you like to acquire a new power that would help you overcome the problems in your present?
- 3) Would you like to have your future secured?

I'm sure your answer is yes. You can have all these by appropriating for yourself the resurrection power of God. When you believe that Jesus died for you, that he was buried, and that he rose again from the dead, then the power that brought Jesus to life is available to you. But like everything else in life, that power is dormant unless you do something about it. You've got to take some action steps. Understanding what I've just talked about is not enough to get you into heaven. You've got to accept it and act on it. You pray and say to God, "God, I'm scrapping Plan A. I know that I'll never earn my way to Heaven. I know I'll never be good enough. I've already blown it enough times to know I'm not going to make the 100% thing. So I'm asking You to work Plan B in my life. Jesus Christ, I want to

trust You, follow You, get to know You and have a relationship." That's how Gods' power of resurrection can change your life... forever.

Let Us Pray...