



Sermon Growth Guide

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Resurrection Life | Romans 8:1-11

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Key Verse: Romans 8:11 – “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.”

Big Idea: If you are in Christ, the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now lives in you, giving Resurrection Life.

Foundations

Romans 8 doesn't begin with a call to behave better; Paul begins with good news. There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. That's not a feeling to chase or a standard to maintain—it's a verdict already declared. And from that verdict flows a new power: the Spirit of life, breaking the old patterns of sin and death and awakening something entirely new within us. The Christian life isn't about trying harder to be better people. It's about living from a different source altogether. One path—the flesh—keeps us curved in on ourselves, chasing things that promise life but quietly drain it away. The other—the Spirit—leads to life and peace, even when it asks for surrender, trust, and sacrifice. This is not theoretical. It presses into what we desire, how we think, what captures our attention, and what shapes our days. Paul is clear: everyone is moving in a direction; everyone is on a path. The question is not if we are being formed, but by what power. So the invitation is clear and present: Pray for resurrection life—not just someday, but today. Pray that the Spirit would fill you, reorient you, and empower you to walk with Jesus—not as one striving to become alive, but as one who already is.

Understanding God's Word

Read Romans 8:1-11 together. What does the news that there is “no condemnation” actually free you from? What does it free you for? When you hear “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you” (v.11), what stirs in you—confidence, doubt, indifference?

Applying God's Word

Read Romans 8:5-8. How would you describe the difference between a mind set on the flesh and a mind set on the Spirit? Which direction do you see most clearly shaping your thoughts and desires right now?

Witnessing God's Word

Who in your life seems to be “running on empty”—spiritually disconnected, exhausted, or searching for life? How does understanding “resurrection life” change the way you see and engage those people? The sermon challenged us to think about trajectory: life or death. How might your presence point someone toward life?

In 2011, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) launched a new campaign. Something different from anything they'd done before. It was called Preparedness 101: Zombie Pandemic. With it, they released a comic book that tells the story of a zombie apocalypse, and it came with instructions to assemble your own "Emergency Zombie Pandemic Kit." A lot of people latched onto this "Zombie Apocalypse Prep" trend. There's a car that drives around my neighborhood with decals that say, "Zombie Outbreak Response Team!!" with bloody handprints painted onto the sides. Honestly, I think this is something we need to pay serious attention to. We're going to talk about zombies this morning.

This world is filled with the living dead, the walking dead. They don't have flesh hanging off of them, but you see them every day. It's the countless masses who are plodding through life, beat up and exhausted. The countless who are living with mild anger buzzing under the surface, constant annoyance and frustration. The countless who are pursuing wealth, status, experiences, influence as a means to life or salvation instead of pursuing true life. It's all who are walking a path that is but a shadow of the true life that is offered to us in Christ. So this morning, I'm not saying you need to worry about your neighbor biting you. I'm saying we need to worry about whether we are on a trajectory toward death or toward life.

It's common for preachers to ask the question, "If you were to die today, how much confidence do you have in what would happen to your soul?" But we also want to ask, "If you don't die today, what will happen with your soul?" Both questions are important as we turn our attention to Romans 8.

Last week, Pastor Tim walked us through Paul's wrestling passage. Paul goes on and on about what he wants to do but can't seem to do. He says in his mind he is a slave to God's law. He belongs to God's law and longs to do it. But in his flesh, his sarx, he is a slave to sin. His body pulls him toward sin. This is a bit like me attempting to eat healthy. I know in my mind that I want a salad. I would be happy to be a slave to a salmon salad with goat cheese and heirloom tomatoes. But in my flesh, like all who have Chicago, IL on their birth certificates, I am enslaved to deep dish pizza.

Paul wrestles with this because he knows that sin leads to more than just needing to loosen a belt another notch. Sin comes with dire consequences. Paul has already told us that the path of the flesh is a path to death, that the wages of sin is death. Just like us, Paul wrestled with the desire to do right but the propensity to do wrong. But he also had good news to proclaim. Despite us deserving consequences for our actions, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Hear this. There are consequences for our sin. There is condemnation. Every person is on a trajectory toward death and estrangement from God if not for Christ's intervention. For those who are in Christ, there is no condemnation or death. To be in Christ means to be in fellowship with him, to be in companionship with Jesus. To be in Christ is like a piece of paper in a Bible. Wherever the Bible goes, the paper goes. Whatever happens to the Bible happens to the paper. Nothing can get to the paper without going through the Bible. The paper is joined to the Bible. That is what it is to be in Christ.

Often when we see “you” in scripture it is plural, meaning all of you. But not here. This is singular. Paul isn’t speaking in generalities. He is driving home a personal and individual application of God’s love. If you are in Christ Jesus, you have been set free from sin and death. You are invited into a new life, a resurrection life, a life that is full and in step with Jesus.

The Mosaic Law was given so people could live in harmony with God, but throughout Israel’s history we see the impact of sin. They can’t seem to live it out. Scholar Dale Bruner said the old law told us what to do, but we did not have the strength to do it on our own. So the good news in Romans 8 is that God in Christ did for us what we were unable to do. He sent Jesus to be a sin offering. Jesus took the sin of the flesh into his own flesh so that we who are living with the Holy Spirit could be made righteous.

Paul emphasizes the differences between life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. He paints two portraits. The first is a person focused on the pleasures and comforts of this world. Their attention is on fleeting things. They are trying to save themselves from the pain of life and are walking a path that leads to death. We have modern portraits of this. Don Draper from *Mad Men*, building success and power but empty inside. Jay Gatsby, living a lie and miserable beneath the surface. Regina George, crafting a life of status and control that is fragile and fleeting. These are the living dead, zombies walking through life, seemingly alive but far from life.

The second portrait is different. It is a portrait of resurrection life, a person governed by the Spirit, living Kingdom life, relying on Jesus for salvation and

finding peace. We see this in people like Corrie ten Boom, who forgave her captor, Fred Rogers, who lived with quiet integrity and love, and Martin Luther King Jr., who pursued justice with conviction and nonviolence.

These are the options: life in the flesh, sin, and death, or life in the Spirit. Living according to the Spirit means walking in a Christian lifestyle. Our lives will bear fruit. It will be evident. But it is not about legalism or checking boxes. It is about living more and more into the truth and life God has for you. If you are swimming in and with the Holy Spirit, consumed by Kingdom life, then you will have life. The Holy Spirit will fill you with abundant life. You will not be one of the undead wandering as a hollow shell.

Paul closes by saying that if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then that same Spirit will give life to your mortal bodies. If you have surrendered your life to Jesus, the same power that conquered the grave dwells in you. That should give you confidence to stand firm. This is one of the incredible claims of Christianity. God will renew physical bodies. There is life after life after death when the Kingdom of God is realized in its fullness.

But we are also thinking about the shape our lives take now. At my house there’s a stretch of land behind the garage filled with overgrowth. Last summer I cleared it out. It looked clean but dead. Recently I went back and saw shoots of green coming up everywhere. What I thought I killed had come back to life. That space experienced resurrection life.

Friends, we are resurrection people. Our hearts are gardens where the Spirit

grows new life. We are not alone in this. We are part of a larger body that is flourishing, clinging to the hope of resurrection life, bearing witness to the life found in Jesus. We are part of a global movement where believers are proclaiming the Kingdom in all circumstances. Christians around the world are praying for resurrection life to be experienced in us, for us to be awakened to the life of Jesus, for our lives to be marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

So the invitation is to pray for resurrection life. Pray that the Spirit reforms your heart and mind. Pray that you walk in Christ with confidence, not wondering what you must do to be loved by God. If you are in Christ, there is no condemnation. Nothing can separate you from the love of God. Pray that the Spirit grows fruit in you.

And remember that zombie response team car. As of today, you have been recruited. Think this week about who the walking dead are in your life. Who is God calling you to share resurrection life with. Pray that God uses you to plant or water seeds of life. Pray that out of dead stumps, new life would spring up in your heart and in the hearts of those you are called to serve.