

God's Sufficiency for Godly Living

Lesson 6

Resurrected Living by God's Sufficiency

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With this final session, “Resurrected Living by God’s Sufficiency,” we shall complete our course discussing God’s Sufficiency for Godly Living. God calls the believer to walk uprightly with Him, to walk in the path of godliness, neither indulging the flesh nor living selfishly, but pleasing and honoring and serving the Lord. The focus of this series has not been what the godly path is, though we have given some attention to that along the way. The majority of attention has been devoted to the resource from where the believer finds the sufficiency to walk in such a godly life. Our emphasis is upon God’s sufficiency for godly living.

Here now, our focus turns to resurrected living by God’s sufficiency. The Lord shows clearly in His word that the best life a Christian can muster up will never be adequate for that life in which God calls His people to walk. This is the fact of natural life and the human experience. No matter the dedication and zealous heart of the believer, so long as he strives in his own power, he will fail. Despite this, there is a resurrected life available for all believers in Christ Jesus. Resurrected living by God’s sufficiency is about learning to live by the sufficiency of God and how that life enables the believer to walk increasingly in a life reflecting one’s resurrection. A life sustained and energized by the resurrection power of God is daily available to all His children. This again speaks of the issues we have dealt with several times in 2 Corinthians 3:5-6.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
(2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

The life the Spirit gives is resurrection life. The new covenant is a covenant of grace and God's new arrangement for living within the new and living way. The old deadness of the law is passed. The deadness of human striving and the resources of the flesh is no more. The Spirit gives new life. The new covenant is the covenant of the Holy Spirit, a covenant by which the grace of God is poured out by the working of His Spirit. And in that grace is the very provision for resurrected living. While once dead in Adam and in his own human resources, there was deadness in man. But through resurrection, death is beaten for the believer.

And be certain that man is not sufficient to raise himself from the dead, from the strength of the Law. One cannot simply just try hard enough until resurrection life bursts forth. Only by faith and dependence upon God Himself can man tap into the ever-flowing source of resurrection life—life found only in Jesus Christ.

The Resurrection and the New Covenant

Here then is another aspect of the provisions of life under the new covenant of the grace of God. Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you." The blood of Jesus Christ not only forgives sins, but as well secures God's people a glorious arrangement making the resurrection life of Jesus Christ their resource to draw on daily. That is the source from which the believer's sufficiency flows. And this source is abundantly sufficient to produce a new kind of life of resurrection—a life empowered by the resurrection power of God.

In this matter of resurrected living by God's sufficiency, let us consider momentarily the relationship between resurrection and the new covenant. They really do fit well together, hand-in-hand and hand-in-glove. Luke speaks to the resurrection and to its relationship to the new covenant describing the forgiveness of sins and newness of life.

When the hour had come, Jesus sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; "for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; "for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:14-20)

Here we are told of the last Passover feast the Lord observed before the cross. This became the first Lord's Supper that He instituted for the church, commanding that all believers would, in remembrance of Him, take the bread and the cup. The bread reminds of His body, the perfect sacrificial Lamb sent in the place of His people. The wine reminds of His blood, spilt on the behalf of His sheep as He went in their place all the way to death. The blood of the Son of God is priceless washing all believers from every sin. The church remembers this in the institute of the Lord's Supper.

Still, Christ spoke of partaking of this meal again with His people again some day—this on the eve of His death. Implied in this narrative of the Lord's Supper is very special revelation about the new covenant. In describing that great covenant and how it was purchased, Jesus spoke of

partaking again. There is the solid implication of resurrection. The only way the Lord could ever partake of this supper again with His followers, even with those who believe in this day, would be if there were a resurrection intervening between the time at which he spoke and when He would partake. Resurrection is here implied as the new covenant is taught.

But there is a still tighter relationship. And not just one subtly implied. Perhaps the greatest resurrection passage in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 15, solidifies the link between resurrection and the new covenant. It develops further the relationship as it speaks of the Gospel.

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Paul here speaks to the essential aspects of the Gospel, the Good News. It involves the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures. Promised in the Scriptures, described in the Scriptures, and fulfilled in the message of the Scriptures is Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as Savior and Lord. That is the heart of the Gospel. That is the Good News. The Good News is God's new arrangement for living. The Gospel is, in fact, the new covenant and the new covenant is the Gospel. The new covenant is God's provision of grace for forgiveness and new life. And the resurrection is critical to it.

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty. (1
Corinthians 15:14)

Resurrection is essential to Christianity. If there is no resurrection, then all the Gospel proclamation is vain. There is no reason to speak of the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, forgiveness of sin, and life in Christ, *if* Christ is not risen from the grave. If Christ is not risen, preaching is empty. Without resurrection, Christian doctrine becomes merely one more dead religious message about one more dead religious leader. Yet Christianity is not dead—for Christ is indeed risen. The Gospel is based upon a risen Christ. The Good News is founded upon the fact that Jesus, the Lord and Savior, is alive today.

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your
sins! (1 Corinthians 15:17)

If Christ was not raised from the dead, the Christian faith, faith placed in the Lord Jesus, would be futile, empty, vain, pointless. All men would still be dead in sin. If Christ Jesus were still in a tomb, the believer's sins would still be unforgiven. It would just be evidence of another religious leader dying with a message he had not the strength to fulfill. Resurrection is crucial.

Mankind needed someone who would go through death for him and come out the other side victorious over sin and death. Mankind needed one who would prove to be God in the flesh, not just a martyr dying for a cause.

But now Christ is risen from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

Christ is alive! The Lord Jesus is risen! That is the Gospel. That is critical to the Good News for that is the Good News. Sin is vanquished for God's people for Christ indeed has risen from the grave, death defeated and sin laid low.

In Luke 22 at the Last Supper, the resurrection is implied as essential, as a part of the new covenant. In 1 Corinthians 15, the crux of the new covenant, spoken of as the Gospel, is the resurrection and it is declared as essential. Without the resurrection there is no good news. Without life from the dead, there is no Gospel. There is no new covenant if Christ is not living today.

The new covenant is purchased by the shed blood of one who would rise again, proving by Romans 1:4 that there is by the resurrection declared the ultimate power of and to the Son of God. It was not simply a man who died for the sins of his followers, but a man who was God in the flesh paying atonement for His own people. His death was not just a matter of one man dying for another, but in Christ's death the very Godhead participates fully. Because Christ Himself is infinite, there exists infinite value in His shed blood—value enough to cover the sins of all mankind.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord
Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57)

Victory over sin and death is made the believer's through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. No man could have any secure hope to go beyond the grave without the resurrection of the Lord. No man could hope to have forgiveness of sins without the resurrection of the Lord Jesus

Christ. And now, Christ is risen and all His people can now sing in their hearts, “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory!” Spiritual victory is not something we achieve or establish. It is something that is given to us. It is a gift of the grace of God.

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.

(2 Corinthians 2:14)

Here is another song of thanksgiving. Even as 1 Corinthians 15:57 spoke of thanksgiving for the victory in Christ, here Paul speaks forth thanksgiving to God for leading the church in that resurrection victory. God leads His servants in resurrection victory—the servants of the new covenant. Paul continues in 2 Corinthians 3:6, "God who also made us sufficient as servants of the new covenant."

New covenant servants are always led in resurrection victory whenever they let the Lord do the leading. If the believer follows after humanity, follows after the world, the flesh, or the devil, or follows his own wisdom, he is not letting the Lord lead. Without the Lord's guidance into the paths of righteous service, the believer will certainly stumble around in defeat no matter how circumstances or experience are pushing him. But whenever he lets the Lord lead, he will always be lead into triumph in Christ. Whether life looks triumphant or feels triumphant is beside the point. Recall that the believer lives by faith rather than by sight. If the believer is truly and by faith letting God lead his steps into righteousness, relying upon His wisdom and sovereignty, he will remain confident in God despite outward appearances. “Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph.” This is the resurrection victory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Resurrection and Justification

Resurrection affects two major arenas of living before God: the believer's initial experience of God and then his day-to-day walk in the path of righteousness. This deals with birth and growth. These are described in two of the great New Testament biblical words: justification and sanctification.

We shall treat both, but first we should start with the resurrection and justification. The resurrection is tied intimately into justification. Justification could not take place without the resurrection. Justification is the declaration of just standing before God. It is a declaration of righteousness. It is better than “not guilty,” “innocent,” or “exonerated.” It is the active opposite of guilty. It is good and just and honorable and righteous and, best of all, holy.

All believers have recognized their own guilt and sin. Because of that corruption, no man may come into the presence of God, be a part of the family of God, know God as a friend, or live with Him forever. Man must be made just, must be made right. He must be justified. He must become the object of an act of justification. This can only take place by the grace of God and it is directly connected to the resurrection.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

God's children have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ—and this based solely upon His abundant mercy. And they have been born again to a living hope. Their justification, being

declared righteous in the sight of God through faith in Christ, includes new birth. And this new birth calls them to a living hope.

Recall that biblical hope is not any sort of blind or wishful hope. Christ Jesus is called the Blessed Hope. He is the Blessed Hope because the word hope in the New Testament implies a guarantee. Hope is cause for expectation. It is the basis of certainty. Christ is the Blessed Hope because He is the blessed certainty. He is the sure expectancy. There is an absolute and happy guarantee that He shall come back. And every believer is born again to a living hope, to a sure guarantee, to certainty, to cause for expectation that is living and breathing. The believer is born again into new life in Christ. And spiritual birth is a new birth to a living hope. The believer's expectation of heavenly blessing and provision is based upon resurrection life. And all this is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The resurrection of Christ offers an expectation pulsating with life abundant. It offers resurrection hope for it is birthed in sure resurrection past. Turning death to life and defeat to victory, the resurrection holds great power. And it powers our hope. Resurrected life is now the portion of all who believe—for now they are in Christ Jesus who himself resurrected and now grants the gift of life to all who ask in faith. Justification raises all who believe—who were dead in trespasses and sins—to newness of life.

The fact is that man does not simply need enlightenment and spiritual reformation, as if it were religion itself that could cure man's disease of corruption at his core. He needs a personal resurrection, a resurrection of his heart and soul and mind. This is what the believer is granted in Christ: a rising from the dead to newness of life.

The Resurrection and Sanctification

Yet too many who have come alive in Christ on the basis of His resurrection, try afterward to establish a Christian life by their own resolutions, their own resolves, their own vows, their own promises, their own resources, or their own sufficiency. Man is raised to newness of life and then he tries to build a life in the old ways, on the old resources. These old resources never did anyone any good. Everyone inherited them from Adam and no one has ever gotten anywhere on their merits.

The Christian life is a resurrection life. That life can only be found in a resurrected Lord. And that resurrection life that can only be found in a resurrected Lord can only be built and developed following a resurrected Lord. The Christian life is not just a religious new leaf the believer turns over. It is not simply the inspiration of joining a new religious club that stokes the fire of man's soul as he involves himself in new activities and new vocabulary.

The Christian life is a resurrection life. Without the resurrection, the life will not begin. But without that same resurrection power at work in the daily Christian living, there is no continued life. Without the resurrection power of the Gospel, there is no way in which to find the sufficient resources to live the life that believers are called to—because it is a resurrection life to which the Christian is called. The Christian life begins, grows, and culminates entirely in the perfected power of the resurrection.

Now it is relatively easy for people to agree that resurrection and justification are tied intimately together. To put it another way, no man can be born again apart from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in that risen Lord who died and rose again on our behalf. But there is just as intimate a tie between the resurrection and sanctification. And this is not so readily accepted.

Justification is related to new birth, to beginning a new life with God. Sanctification is related to growing in the Lord, walking on with the Lord, and getting acquainted with the Lord.

Justification is the starting point. Sanctification is that which follows.

Sanctification is the process of the believer being conformed evermore into the image of Christ. Yet this is no act of the believer's discipline. This is not the believer working in his life trying to be the best he can be. This is not the believer making promises or even heartfelt verbal commitments. No, this is still the power of the resurrection at work. The resurrection is directly related to the progressive path of sanctification. It is by the resurrection of Christ that His sheep are being set apart, literally, more and more, to the purposes, the glory, and the use of God.

This day-by-day work in the believer's life cannot take place apart from this glorious implication of the reality of the resurrection and its power in daily Christian living. Daily Christian living is also to draw on the benefits of the resurrection.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. (Ephesians 1:18-19)

Paul prays that the church would know three things in this short passage: the hope of Christ's calling; the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; and then third, the exceeding greatness of His power toward us. Our focus of study here will concentrate on the third portion,

but note the very thrust of the prayer. It is a prayer that the eyes of the believers' understanding would be enlightened that they might know fully of certain things (the hope, riches, and power of Christ and their relation to His bride). Day by day, God wants His people to know and experience these things.

God wants us to know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. Too much of the time, too many believers are drawing upon the sufficiency of man to try and live the Christian life. They look to human power to make each day work as Christians. That is not what God wants the believer to learn for it is something all man already knows. He knew that in Adam. It is in man's very nature (corrupt as it is) to bear down, get tough, bite the bullet, and reach deep inside for the strength to carry on. This is nothing more or better than simply man drawing upon the insufficient resources of man rather than upon the abundant resources of God.

Rather than have His children focusing on their inner strengths, the Lord wants them to know what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards them, working on their lives. In fact, according to the working of His mighty power—

Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead
and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.
(Ephesians 1:20)

The power God wants His children to know about, to increasingly understand, and to walk in day by day is this great resurrection power that works toward His people. It is available to work upon their lives and then in and through those same lives. This is His power. This is the working of His

mighty power that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. It is resurrection power.

The power all believers are to draw upon for daily Christian living is resurrection power. This power works in and through all aspects of the believer's humanity, but becomes the very energizing dynamic in and through all of it. For a Christian, for a new covenant servant, for one living by the grace of God—not depending on man's sufficiency but putting their hope in God's sufficiency—that sufficiency flows forth naturally in this form, resurrected life.

The resource of an energizing, dynamic power that is available to all believers is beyond comprehension. And because of man's nature, he is very prone to forget just how much power is available him. Man is so constantly aware and distracted by his own resources that inexplicably, he forgets the power of God. Yet every believer should be constantly proclaiming the gospel of resurrection life to every other believer in order that each might be constantly reminded of the true source of their power to live. The power of Christ is of a different realm. He commands the oceans to quiet and the storms to still. And it is by the power of Christ and His resurrection that the believer lives and thrives.

The sufficiency of God includes resurrection power. Living by God's sufficiency *is* living in resurrection power. God wants the believer to know this power. There is a direct relationship between the resurrection and sanctification. The resurrection of Christ is the kind of power His bride needs for the godly life to which she is called.

The great desire of the apostle Paul is that he might know God. Knowing God is the heart of it all. It is the heart of life itself. The believer finds eternal life when he meets God in Jesus Christ. He

grows in that life as he gets acquainted with God through Christ. His faith is built. His trust and hope is focused and enlarged as we get to know the Lord.

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

(Philippians 3:10)

At first glance it may seem as if Paul is speaking of four things here: 1) knowledge of Him, 2) the power of the resurrection, 3) the fellowship of His sufferings, and 4) conformity to death. Yet this is not truly so. One stands out like a mighty mountain above the others: knowing Him. That little word, “and,” as the implication often in the New Testament, can even be translated as, “even,” or “that is.” “That I may know Him, *even in this way*, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” Actually what is listed here is one great reality above all realities. In fact, Paul called knowing the Lord the number one issue in life.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. (Philippians 3:8)

That word excellence could be translated as “surpassing value.” Paul says that everything he had or could come up with on his own was worth nothing in comparison the surpassing value of knowing Christ. Paul considered it all waste in comparison. This knowledge of such value comes partially through God's self-revelation of through the word, by His Spirit. But in depth and reality, knowledge comes through that revealed through Scripture in combination with the experience of that revelation applied in the path the believer walk along. By God's grace, what

the believer is shown of the character of Christ in the word becomes the manner in which he walks.

And here are three arenas where the word gets applied out into believers' lives—three arenas in which they come to know better the Lord of their salvation. These are resurrection, suffering, and death. The believer's path to knowledge begins in resurrection. In fact the believer's first real knowledge of the Lord, the regeneration he experiences upon being born again, is an act of the resurrection power of God. He is raised from death. When once dead in trespasses and sins, the believer has been made alive and raised with the Lord Jesus.

But there are other ways to get to know the Lord. And sometimes when some Christians are just about to get to know Him in some new dimension, they think that all the wheels have come off their Christian cart. They are startled because they begin to suffer. Too many are led to believe that suffering is a thing of the past and that earthly life for the Christian is all happy pastures. Shame on the church for not properly preparing the newborns in the kingdom for the inevitable time of suffering that God has in store for each of His sheep.

God wants His people to know Him in the power of His resurrection. And essential to tasting resurrection power is the taste of suffering (even as His Son suffered). Fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is one of the three means to knowledge of God. Those who follow the Lord and walk in that resurrected life and power will necessarily encounter affliction and trouble and trial. Persecution and opposition become the order of the day. The believer's life becomes a battle zone of spiritual warfare. Yet so long as the believer is focused upon his identity in the resurrection Lord Christ, these struggles become strengthening agents, granting the believer a steadfast hope and a greater knowledge of the Lord. The fellowship of His sufferings is an amazing thing.

Christ Jesus Himself suffered much. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His brethren. No one knew the joy of the Father and life as it was designed to be as Jesus did. But He was also a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He went through heartache and heartbreak and He sweat drops of blood in the garden for our sin. But He suffered opposition and persecution because of His righteousness. And as the believer grows in rightness, as he becomes more like Christ, those forces and people who hated Him will have the same attitude toward the believer. Jesus said, "If they persecuted Me, they are going to persecute you." This is the path the believer follows to come to knowledge of the Lord in the fellowship of His suffering. This is important for it allows the believer to grow in his loving appreciation and understanding of our Lord and what life in the Lord is about.

Suffering also occurs as a result of the sinful, fallen, sin-scarred, sin-sick world the believer inhabits. Jesus walked through this world and it brought Him suffering. As the believer walks through the same world to any measure as Christ did, so will he fellowship in the same manner of suffering. The believer is given a share in the same kind of suffering. And so, the believer's appreciation for the Lord grows. Christ left glory above to experience a world of discomfort and violence that He might bear the cross on behalf of His sheep. The contrast between glory and suffering should cause the believer to appreciate the Lord all the more. This is what it means to know the Lord in the fellowship of His suffering.

The third arena in which the believer comes to know better the Lord is often looked forward to the least. This is being conformed to His death. These are the times when everything around us, and sometimes within us, looks and feels as if it is dying. Despair. Heartache. Impossibility.

Buried. Occasionally, a man will feel simply buried—buried under the depth of rubble of the circumstances of life. This is the taste of the conformity to His death.

For all practical purposes, mind, emotion, and will experience an entombment—a whole sense of inadequacy and perplexity. In such times, the believer may feel as though he were Lazarus, lying dead and buried in the grave. Those who walk long with the Lord are almost certain to experience this conformity to His death. They are put in a place similar to Christ's, a place where all hope would be lost if it were not for that last thread of certain hope that the Father would be faithful, even in this. These are the times when believers may even cry out, "Into thy hands I commend my life, my spirit, my everything!" And at times, to fulfill the Father's will and glorify the Father (that it would be His will and not ours that would be done), the believer stands in these circumstances as though dead.

The spiritual anguish can be almost paralyzing. If not for the faithfulness of God, His people would surely perish. Never envy those for the experience, but envy them for the growth that God is working in them through the experience. Being swept up in despair and doubt and fear, the believer has no recourse but to throw himself entirely into the sufficient and loving arms of the Lord. And even as God called Lazarus out from the grave, so will He be faithful to breathe life into the believer's drowning soul. One can never imagine such depths of hopelessness, despair, and doubt until they live in the eye of that hurricane of spiritual hardship. And still, allowing the believer to feel the weight of that kind of impossible helplessness works a marvelous change in the believer. He comes to depend—by his necessity—upon the faithfulness of the Father. Even as Christ was there and was kept by God's faithfulness to Him, so too will the believer be called unto death and then out of death by his loving Father.

And once that conformity to His death has impacted the believer, the threats of the devil and the world mean little. What is the power of the created against the power of the creator? God is faithful to raise His children in power against any threat of destruction. After being raised from out of such a spiritual dying, the believer is granted a whole new view on things. Life comes once again to the believer by the resurrection faithfulness of God. Life goes on with a living hope through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The resurrection is absolutely and thoroughly tied into sanctification—into the daily Christian life.

Paul wanted to know the Lord in all three of these ways: “If by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:11). This does not refer to resurrection at the end, the final resurrection. He already had that by being in Christ. This is something he wanted to appropriate now. Paul wanted to know the Lord this way now.

Paul says, in essence, “I want to know the Lord so greatly, through resurrection, suffering, and a conformity to death—all these means in every way applied—if by any means I might walk in a resurrected kind of living now among this dead world.” In fact the word *resurrection* appears in a unique form and is only used once in the whole New Testament in this manner. It denotes of a *lifting up out of*. Paul wanted to be lifted by his walk with God up above a dead world. He wanted to walk a resurrection life now. He wanted this life and knew it had to be based upon the knowing of God.

Incredibly, when one gets to know the Lord through the conformity to His death, he is necessarily led right back to the resurrection. The ultimate application of the power and grace and work of God in any dying situation is when He raises the believer again. These living resurrections give

the believer a resurrection kind of faith—a faith that realizes that God can work far beyond the extremities of man's limits and imagination. This is the resurrection power.

Further, we see evidence of Paul going through these same experiences in his own life.

Agonizing, but helpful, Paul recognizes these experiences for what they are:

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead. (2 Corinthians 2:8-9)

Paul, being experientially entombed, was being led into conformity to death like Jesus. Put in a place where only the faithfulness of God and resurrection power from God could save him from despair, Paul grew in depths of faith. Those of his party were burdened beyond measure. They were assaulted above and beyond their strength. They despaired of life. They carried about inside themselves a sentence of death.

But note that though they “had the sentence of death,” they died in all these ways in order that “we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.” To realize conceptually the fact that God raises people from death is one thing, but the personally experience of that resurrection brings a whole new strength of meaning to the words. It is another thing entirely to experience firsthand God's power in this way—to be brought to a practical deadness as Paul was and to find out that it is not man who should be trusted but God, who raises the dead.

So often, to bring about in the believer's heart an honest faith, God must work in a way that destroys the believer's faith in himself. Many do not trust wholly in the Lord because they are still trusting in themselves in ways they cannot face or admit.

Paul was taken through agonies here to the end that he and his missionary team would not trust in themselves but "in God who raises the dead." One way in which God purges the believer of self-trust is that He takes that believer to the end of self's resources. Then, when in the midst of the horror of a life gone deadly wrong, the believer is forced to look to God—to look to true power and strength. And God bursts through the clouds of death and gloom and breathes once more that resurrection life into the helpless believer. Through these events, God teaches the believer to trust in Him who is ever able to raise the dead.

This is the resurrection tied in to the Christian life. The Christian life is a resurrection life and such is found only in a resurrected Lord. And it can only be developed by following, getting acquainted with, trusting, and believing that resurrected Lord. The believer is called to resurrected living by God's sufficiency.

Conclusion

We shall conclude this course with the passages with which we began. Recall that this kind of resurrected living by God's sufficiency fits well our theme verses.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as
being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also
made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the

letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

(2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

And further:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

What power? Resurrected power. The resurrected life of Christ.

That the life of Jesus might be manifested in our body. That the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:10-11)

In the believers' earthen vessels, that which is to be seen is the resurrected life of Christ: resurrected living by God's sufficiency.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

We do not speak of a natural human life. We do not look to man's sufficiency. We speak of resurrection life and God's sufficiency through the resurrected life of Christ. The life the believer

today lives in his body of flesh, he lives most truly by faith in the Son of God. His lives in resurrected living by faith in Jesus Christ.

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear
with him in glory. (Colossians 3:4)

Christians are given life from God, eternal life, but the life He gives is His own life to share. As a vine shares its life with a branch, so does Christ share His resurrected life with His sheep. This brings all power to the believer in all sufficiency. Colossians 3:11 speaks of the new creation, the body of Christ, where Christ is all and in all. Jesus Christ lives in all of His people. He wants to be all that all of them will ever need. He is their all in all. He is in all of His people and He is all they shall ever need. The Lord is a risen Lord who lives on—and it is to that fact that Christ's people may look for their all-sufficient strength for daily living.

The believer's comprehensive sufficiency is found in the resurrected life of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the believer trusts in Him, depends on Him, it matters not if he stands in a trial or an opportunity. It matters not if he is called to step out and take action or endure in a waiting process. It matters not how diverse the situations are, the believer's sufficiency is the same: the drawing by faith upon the resurrected life of the resurrected Lord Jesus who lives in His people. By His Spirit, He wants that life lived in His people and out through them. In God's sufficiency for godly living there is included this glorious reality: resurrected living by the sufficiency of God.