



ZWTF

Sunday, November 17, 2013 Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

ROMANS ^{Part 5}

Chapter 1:4



“ ... Who is designated Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead), Jesus Christ, our Lord ...”

I am taking great pains in the beginning of Romans to highlight several of Paul’s opening phrases. They are so important. So far, we have discussed:

- ▶ “A called apostle ... ”
- ▶ “ ... concerning His Son ... ”
- ▶ “ ... the seed of David ... ”
- ▶ “ ... a slave of Christ Jesus ... ”

This week, I would like to concentrate on the phrase, “ ... designated Son of God with power ... by the resurrection of the dead.”

These important pronouncements set the tone for the rest of the book. Unless we remember them—and keep them on the tip of our minds—we will forget what Romans is about. We will lose the forest for the trees. I won’t let that happen. Additionally, I like to make these things personal. You know me: nothing in Scripture is a theological statement. It all has to make sense in the context of my life. It must be a present help. The truths behind these statements have the potential to change each of our lives, that is, if we pause long enough to savor them and let Paul reach down through the ages to speak to us.

“ ... designated Son of God with power ... by the resurrection of the dead.”

God knows we need power. In every aspect of life, we feel so weak. Maybe I should speak for myself. Some days, it’s all I can do to keep going. Occasionally, we need to feel power from God—any power. It’s the “throw me a bone” syndrome. I sometimes feel like a starving dog. It is easy to become discouraged in days of such apostasy and faithlessness. If you sometimes feel this way, take courage. You are not alone. I get emails from many people who also feel on the edge of survival. Any man or woman of God—even a great one—can be strained to the breaking

point. Today, we are walking by faith, not perception. It was not always this way. How much easier to pull fish from baskets like so many Kleenexes. Or walk on water like Jesus. Or see your father raised from the dead. But this is not that day.

FAITH

What is faith? Faith is an assurance of things which are not being seen. And yet, our faith is not based on nothing. It is based on the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, that is, the vitalizing power of God. Do you see how practical this power is? *It raises people from the dead.* Death is our greatest enemy. It's why you look in the mirror and sometimes hate yourself. It's why you're sick. It's why your parents are no longer around. It's why you keep



sinning. We have, within us, the spirit of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). Inherent in the spirit of God is the power to raise dead people. Raising the dead is the greatest evidence of spiritual power. If the dead are raised—or if mortality is abolished—you want for nothing else. That's the whole enchilada—the resurrection of the dead.

This power, however, is presently bottled within, sealed tighter than a Kraft mayonnaise jar. It is a miracle-in-waiting. (Same with the mayonnaise jar.) It is so important to know that God raised Christ from the dead. Why? Because we have the same spirit He had, albeit in measure. Yes, He gave His spirit up to God, but when God returned it, Jesus Christ came to life. We may not have been eyewitnesses to the power of the resurrection of Christ, but God provided for us by providing eyewitnesses, recorders, scribes, men who saw it and testified to its reality by putting pen to papyrus. Paul was one of these servants.

Think of how merciful God is. “Designated Son of God, with power.” Though taking the form of a lowly ser-

vant, Jesus Christ was not without power. It vitalized Him day by day as He walked here. But God tightly controlled the display of it, as He does with us. Nevertheless, on occasion, people saw evidence of it.

The spirit (that is, the power) that inhabited Christ also inhabits us. “The spirit testifies with our spirit, that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). Again, this spirit—this power—raises people from the dead. I am going to keep saying that. This power also multiplies food. It walks on water. It levitates. The paradox is that this amazing power housed itself in the most un-assuming Man. He was a man you could pass by on the street, and not know Him. This is how hidden the power was in Him, and how hidden it is now, in us.

THE PRESENT LOT OF GREATNESS

Were this an administration of signs and miracles, we would be doing some of the same works Jesus did. This is not that administration, however. (All so-called resurrections today are false.) Since this is an administration of faith and grace, we simply must believe we *have* the power, but are withheld from exercising it. We must believe it without seeing it. This is the divine plan. This is what is so hard. And yet, I am imploring you to believe it, even as I implore myself. This is one of the reasons Paul wrote Romans, to make you aware of some life-changing facts. They can only change your life only if you believe them without seeing them.

Some strange thing is not happening to you. You are not a loser. The power is there; it is on hold. “On hold” is the opposite of being on parade. Someday, it will be on parade. (The spirit of God is not on parade today. All parades of the spirit of God today—chiefly those wrought through Pentecostal channels—are fabricated by human desire, human emotion, tricks of hypnosis, false reports, and satanic manifestations.) Today, you live your daily life and no one knows you. You, a son or daughter of God, cannot pay some of your bills, let alone walk on water or heal yourself. You are in good company. Jesus Christ had no place to rest His head. Paul temporarily headquartered in a swamp. During the last part of his life, he lived in jail. He was not Pentecostal.

“During the last part of his life, Paul lived in jail. He was not Pentecostal.”

This is the present lot of greatness.

ROMANS IN THE SHADOWS

Hidden power is the glory of Romans as well. The book of Romans is wild with glory. Power is crawling all over it. You must think of this while reading Romans. You will be looking at a collection of words, in a bound book. There are many other books on your shelf, or on your table. It is so easy to be tricked into thinking that this book is like all of the others. In its physical constitution, it is. But there is something more going on here—which also went on in Christ, and goes on in you—that does not initially greet the eye. What appears ordinary, is bombastic.



The book of Romans is the most extraordinary piece of literature you will ever set your eyes upon. No man could have written this. People ask me all the time, “How do you know that God wrote the Scriptures?” By this: *If man had written them, they would have put a far better light on man.*

Here in the early chapters of Romans, Paul is about to consign the whole of humanity to helplessness beneath sin and death. He is going to condemn the worldly people, as well as the religious people. (This happens in chapters 2 and 3.) Such a concise, well-rounded death blow to hu-

man ability had never before seen paper. Humankind believes religion saves individuals, and thus the world. It does not. You and I assume religion to be bad. It is. Yet no one truly grasped the full futility of it until Paul wrote Romans. He put the Jews in the same boat as the Gentiles. As far as I know, this had never happened before. Apart from Jews and Gentiles, there’s no one left. In chapter 2, Paul confronts the greatest religion in the world—the Jewish religion—and decimates its adherents. All of their hopes and dreams, in themselves, go smash. If the Jews are smashed, what can we say about the rest of humanity? Triple-smashed. Not a prayer. No one has a prayer to save him or herself; not a single word can be uttered from any of us. We are shut up.

Man would not write this of himself. Man would have the race in shiny pants, riding on the backs of elephants, throwing confetti. Not even Christianity would write this. According to them, “God helps those who help themselves.” This non-Scriptural statement opposes the spirit and message of Romans.

NOT ANOTHER BOOK

Romans vibrates off the page—if you can see it. The power is in the message. The power is not on the page, or the ink, or in the binding. Considering only these things, Romans is like any other book. It’s the arrangement of the letters to make the words, and the arrangement of the words to make the paragraphs, and the arrangement of the paragraphs to make the letter, which makes it singular. Never in the history of writing have words been so crafted and arranged.

What’s the main message of Romans? After painting the helplessness of humanity, Paul gives the answer to humanity’s deepest problem: death. This makes Romans *really* different: the answer. In the Old Testament we saw much of the sin of Israel and the nations, though in different places. Never did we see the answer, however. The “answer” then was a temporary fix; a Band-aid. A deferment of payment. Romans is the story of how God permanently fixes death, and thus sin. (We sin because we are dying—Romans 5:12). What could be more important to know? In this letter, God sets forth His plans for all humanity. He accomplishes everything through the horrible death of His Son. Through the horrible death of His Son, we see how much He loves us. It’s that simple. He dies for enemies. He reconciles the people driving nails through His feet. When the spirit is present to see and apprehend it, Romans ends all reli-

gion, all human striving.

This is what we want.

God channels neither salvation nor love through our faith, our righteousness, or our willing intention. To think any of this (most Christians think all of it) is to negate this vital, trembling, glowing book, from which emanates, in blessed hands, the power of the resurrection of dead people.

THE RESURRECTION OF DEAD PEOPLE

If you realize that the power that raised Christ Jesus lives inside you, it will help get you through your day. Talk about a mega-vitamin. Paul said in Philippians 3:10-12:

That I may be found in Him, not having my righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God for faith: to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, conforming to His death, if somehow I should be attaining to the resurrection that is out from among the dead. Not that I already obtained, or am already perfected. Yet I am pursuing, if I may be grasping also that for which I was grasped also by Christ Jesus.

“To know the power of His resurrection ... not that I already obtained it, or am already perfected.”

Thank you, Paul. This is my point, precisely. We are to think continually upon this living power that awoke the crucified Son of God from the death state. The presence of this inner power will not, at present, stay the hand of aging, or cure us from all physical ills. We possess but an earnest of our full inheritance. When God imparts the entire measure, death will explode—for

us. God would not be so mean to deprive us of an earnest of the coming fullness. No matter how little spirit you have, concentrate on it. This is who you are. (The least rudder drives the largest ship—James 3:4). This is who you are and what you really have. The rest of the world, for now, does not have it. Christians don't have it; this measure of spirit is the exclusive property of members of the body

of Christ. You were grasped by Christ Jesus for this, as was Paul. Don't bemoan your imperfection. You're not perfect yet; neither was Paul. He continually reminded himself of the things of which I'm reminding us.

THE SECOND AMAZEMENT

The writer of Romans died alone in a prison cell, practically unheralded. That is the first amazement. The second amazement is reverse amazement: Presses have produced millions of copies of Paul's words, yet still the man and his message remain a secret. How can this be? Talk about glory sealed and protected. The Gideons have placed Bibles—again, millions of copies of Paul's humble letters—into every hotel room in America. These hotels receive millions of guests. How many people truly know Paul? Only a handful upon the earth.

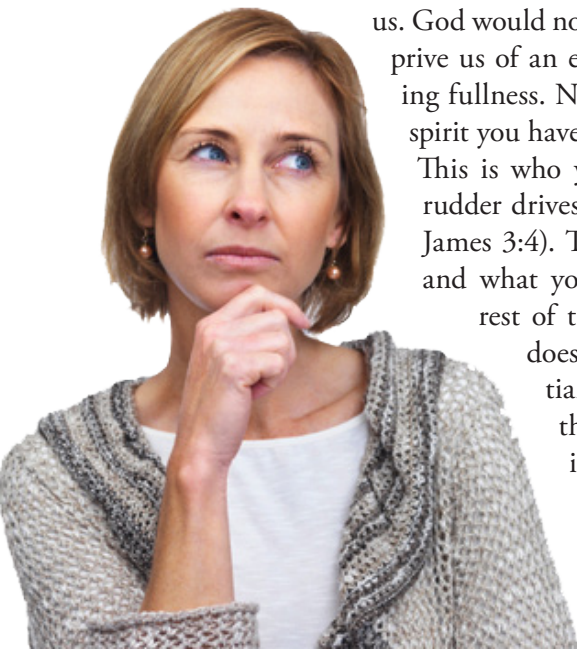
It is a reverse miracle, but a miracle nonetheless. Truth is veiled within and without. It is veiled within humble vessels; it is veiled despite being the most published truth on the planet.

Again, it's power contained. Latent energy, inside of you. This is spiritual. Spiritual does not mean unreal. The same power that raised Christ from the dead inhabits you. It's a tiny flame, yet with enough “candlepower” to illuminate and make sense of everything else in your life. It can steer your entire “ship,” if only you pause to think upon it. This is the measure of spirit within you, set there by God, awaiting the hour of its detonation. Think of the power inherent in the atom. It takes the power of God to keep the universe from exploding—such is the inherent power. This is why Colossians says, “... all has its cohesion in Him” (Colossians 1:17).

The opposite of “cohesion” is “blowing up.”

“According to power, according to the spirit of holiness.”

These things seem diametrically opposed. “The spirit of holiness” sounds lovely—tame even. “According to power,” on the other hand, suggests a coming explosion. This is the paradox of being a member of the body of Christ. I will say it again: The same power that raised Jesus Christ is within us. We are a “time bomb,” in the best possible sense. When our true life is manifested (when our time comes, and the “bomb” of immortality detonates within us), the constitution of this world system instantly changes. This is why



Paul says later in this letter, “All creation awaits the manifestation [‘time bomb’] of the children of God.”

Yet some days it is hard to get out of bed.

Our manifestation (“time bomb”) is a detainer, keeping the world from deliverance. More on this when we get to chapter 8, one of my favorite chapters. “All creation is awaiting.” They don’t even know it, this creation. What are they awaiting? Us. They await our manifestation. Our manifestation is the beginning of good things for all beings.

ANATOMY OF RESURRECTION

I am fascinated by the power that raised Christ Jesus from the dead. “Power ... by the resurrection of the dead ...” This is an opening theme in Romans not to be forgotten. Do not, ever, get theological in Romans. It is all practical. Never forget that the power to read Romans and understand it is sourced in the same power that raised Christ Jesus from the dead.

The resurrection of Christ was an earnest of our resurrection. Paul will talk about this in great detail in chapter 6. Christ was raised with power. No one saw the power that raised Christ. The cave was dark, and no one was in there.

I will now show you something I wrote in an earlier draft of this newsletter (yesterday), which I now believe to be wrong. What you are about to read is completely wrong, I believe. It sounds good, but it’s still wrong. I wish it was right, but it’s wrong:

I believe there was a shock of great light. I have no evidence for that. Perhaps I am thinking of Paul; his change on the road to Damascus came with blinding light. I believe the light that raised Christ could have penetrated the cave, but I do not believe it did. But hear this: it could have. This is where “the spirit of holiness” comes in. The power is “separated unto” God. Holy means, “separated unto.” The power obeys its master. If the green light or yellow, or orange, (or whatever color light) emanated from heaven, or from the corpse of our Lord, it was bright enough to illuminate Christ, but not yet the world. After this, it became a thing of faith. Thomas did not even believe it, at first.

Why do I now think this is wrong? I don’t believe there was any light. Rather, here is the power of God: *the eyes of Jesus Christ opened*. They eyes of a dead man fluttered open to behold the roof of the cave. Who needs light? What more power do you want? The resurrection of

our Lord was not a stage show. It was quiet, controlled, albeit almighty. Not the stuff of Christian television, this. The resurrection of Christ would have bored a Christian television audience. They would have packed up their cameras and left. There was no dramatic music, no light, not a single sound besides the whisper of fluttering eyelashes. Yet there, in the decimated cave, is demonstrated the mightiest power of the spirit of our great God.

ANONYMOUS MIRACLES

Apply this to yourself. Who are you in this world? You are the same as Paul. You are unknown, yet recognized. People call you a deceiver, yet you are true. You are weak, yet powerful. You are dying, and yet you are living (2 Corinthians 6:8-9). You contain the greatest treasure known to men and angels (the spirit of God), yet it is not enough to vitalize your weakened frame. You still have to brush your teeth, apply deodorant, wash your socks, gargle. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the transcendence of the power may be of God and not of us”



(2 Corinthians 4:7).

Don’t feel bad. It was the same with Christ: controlled power. “Designated Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness.” He lay inert on that slab for three days. The world counted Him out. Even His own friends counted Him out. His mother counted Him out. The world counts us out. They won’t for long. Something is about to happen. To us. With us. For us. For them.

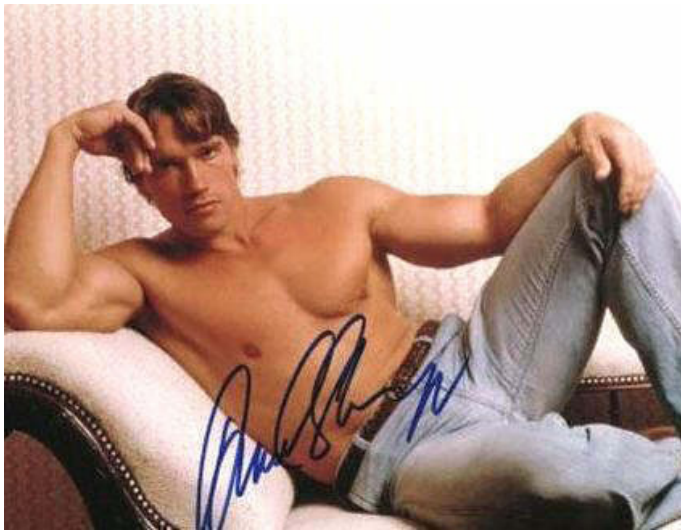
THE LEGEND OF ARNOLD

I used to admire Arnold Schwarzenegger and the impressive resolve and determination required to conform one’s body to the ultimate conformation of human attainment. Admit it, the man was singular. Unreal. A singular specimen of anatomy and resolve. All of these bodybuilders,

thought to be freaks by many, strive to attain what few can.

In his book, “Education of a Bodybuilder,” Arnold spoke of traveling to the Mr. Universe competition in South Africa. When he arrived, many of the other bodybuilders were already in the hotel lobby. When Arnold strolled in, everyone turned to look at him. Arnold was the reigning world champion, poised to defend his title. His presence commanded note.

Arnold noticed the tight-fitting clothes of every other competitor in the lobby that day. The other competitors showed off their physiques. Pants: tight. Shirts: skin tight. Biceps: bulging. Triceps: ripping from the bottoms of cut-off shirt sleeves. Not Arnold. He said that before competi-



tions, he always wore loose clothes, relaxed pants, sandals. He felt no need, no compulsion to flex his assets; he was Arnold Schwarzenegger, the best in the world. Thus designated and known by all, He could be himself. When the hour of competition arrived, *then* the man flowered for all to see. Then, it was time. At every hour, though, and in every place, Arnold knew. So did everyone else.

Arnold said that, when you’re the best, you needn’t posture. It will all come to you. In the same context, Arnold wrote about how he used to drive the most expensive Italian sports car around his home town in Austria, and also in Santa Monica, California, where he trained. He said his greatest joy was to drive the speed limit and obey all traffic signals. Why? He had the fastest car, and everyone knew it. To posture, to pose—at the wrong time—would only reveal some perceived inadequacy or insecurity, none of which Arnold had. Arnold knew that his car was the fastest thing on four wheels, and so did

everyone else. While everyone else stomped gas, burned rubber, cornered like madmen, Arnold cruised. By this *passive assertion of power*, Arnold in fact destroyed competition. This worked on the road as well as in hotel lobbies before bodybuilding competitions. By merely being himself, Arnold intimidated and conquered all fields. He knew who he was.

Our goal is not to intimidate, or to conquer. Here on this planet at the bitter end of Eon 3, we hope only to live well and survive. In order to do that, we *must* entertain, continually, an accurate assessment of ourselves. Here is the assessment: *You are the next rulers of the universe. You are about to be seated at the right hand of God, to be glorified before the universe, not due to your own merits, but to the merits of Jesus Christ.*

IT KNOWS WHAT IT IS

The book of Romans is a reflection of this power. It knows what it is. Thus educated, it does not insist upon gilding. (The Concordant Version, the most accurate translation of Romans, is not gilded.) It need not situate itself upon the topmost bookshelf. And yet, at the same time, were it exalted thus—even held aloft by priests in grim procession—the spirit and power would *always* be overlooked by disciples of self-glorification. I am persuaded of better things concerning us. We, rather, shall sit in quiet contemplation of the death, entombment, resurrection, and glory of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Romans explains everything to you. Your merits are not those things which segregate you from the rest of humanity. The mere acknowledgment of this (that your merits don’t count) is what sets you apart; they believe *they* have done it. You never could have dreamed this. It is too unlikely.

Walk like Arnold and Paul. Ignore posers and posturers. They gather by the gaggle to intimidate you. Don’t let them. See through their religious maneuvering. They want the best sports car, but don’t have it. It’s why they worry and sweat so profusely. It’s why they squabble for the chief seats. Let them go. Keep traveling the speed limit. The chief seat is yours by right; you shall be presented there. The tire-squealing band of pompous preeners is stacked with wannabees; you are the real thing. Your calm impresses, but they won’t acknowledge that. You walk among those not chosen. Deep down, they sense your singularity. You look away, toward something beyond.

It is something beyond, but also within. It is Christ Jesus, and the power that raised Him from among dead ones. ■