



Message Transcript

The Fuel for Building to Last

Cal Rychener

All right, well good morning, BRAVE Church. How y'all doing? Man, you have no idea, it's always an honor to be here. And when Jeff, a guy that can preach like nobody else would entrust his stage and his pulpit, listen, pastors take that as a high honor. I was working this weekend with a large church down in St. Louis and it was about a week and a half ago that Jeff called and said, "Hey, I got an opportunity to just be away. Kimberly and I need to get on out of town for a little bit." And he said, "Are you open that week?"

I said, "Well Jeff, I'm going to be doing Freedom Ministry down in St. Louis with a church for about a week. But for this particular weekend, I wasn't preaching their weekend services." "Well, can you come to Denver?" I said, "You find me a flight that can get me out of there on Saturday night and back in on Sunday evening, and I can be there." And they made it work, so here we are. But I always love it man, and I'm so thrilled at what God is doing in this church.

I watched your Easter services, and Jeff is one of those that I keep up with and listen to his messages. I know you're in this Built To Last Series out of Nehemiah, so I'm not going to mess that up for him. We'll let him continue on in that series. I'm going to touch base a little bit with the series, with the idea of the fuel for Building To Last. We just came off of Easter two weeks ago and of course, we meet on Sundays. The early church started doing that. Why? Because every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection. Amen.

I mean we don't want to leave what happened two weeks ago for another year,

so we come together every week and celebrate. But we just came off of Easter two weeks ago and of course on that first Friday night and Saturday, it didn't look good. The disciples who had watched Jesus die on the cross on Friday, spent all day Saturday and Sunday morning quarantined behind locked doors, fearing that the Roman authorities who had put Jesus to death might come for them as well.

These early disciples were awash. Now I want you to just put yourself in their place because they're in there Friday and Saturday, which is a lot of where some of you may be today, because you don't know Sunday hasn't come yet. Sunday hadn't come yet for them, and they're awash in despair, "We thought He was the One," and they were just disillusioned. And then, they're awash in disappointment with themselves, "We failed Him. Man, we all denied Him."

So the despair in that room is thick, because all they had hoped for was gone. Their dreams were smashed. Life for them would never be the same. But then, something happened on Sunday morning that changed everything for them, and it can change everything for us as well. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, walked out of the grave. And when He did, he KO'd death. He KO'd sin. He KO'd despair. He KO'd all the work of the evil one, and He made possible for you and me to walk in that KO power today. That's what I want to talk to you about.

One of the most famous pictures from boxing history, famous picture of all time is a young 23-year-old Cassius Clay, aka Muhammad Ali. He's standing over the vanquished foe, Sonny Liston. I love that picture, and you can see him just talking to him. And I want you to see that picture again today and overlay onto that, a picture of

Jesus Christ and what He did for you on Resurrection Sunday, as He's saying to the enemy, "I have knocked you out. You are defeated." And that's what He did on Resurrection Sunday, knocking out fear, knocking out despair, knocking out guilt, knocking out shame, knocking out defeat in your life. And then He bids you, rise up through faith in Him and walk in this power.

That power is the Greek word *Dunamis*, from which we get our word dynamite. My dad, before he became a farmer, he worked in heavy equipment, bulldozing and this type of thing, and we always had dynamite around. Now he didn't let us little ones mess with it, but I knew a little bit about dynamite and what it could do. A guy who used to work on our staff had me just rolling one day when he told me the story of how as a 12-year-old, he was at his uncle's house on the 4th of July, and he remembers he had a bag of M-80s. Those of you who are my age might remember what those are. You might have to explain to your kids what's an M-80. Well let them know, it's about a quarter stick of dynamite that was legal back then.

So he thought he'd have his own 4th of July celebration. He went up in the bathroom and was going to throw an M-80 out the window down below onto the patio, and down below were the sliding doors and everybody in his family was sitting in here off the patio. He just wanted them to get a little startled when he dropped an M-80. So he lit that thing up there in the bathroom and he gets ready to drop it out the window, only to find as he goes to throw it out that this thing has a screen nailed onto the window.

So now I'm 12 years old with a sizzling M-80 in my hand ready to go off. I can't throw it out. So what do you do? He did what you would've done. He chucked it in the toilet. How many of you know a little toilet water won't put out a sizzling M-80? And the next thing you know, that M-80 blew that toilet off its bolts in about 15 pieces, not only wrecking that bathroom with water all over the place until they could get that shut off. He spent the rest of the afternoon picking porcelain chips out of his legs.

I'm just rolling as he's telling me the story, but he found out that even a little bit of dynamite can do a lot of damage, right? And God wants you to understand something of that power that He offers to you today, as the fuel that will help us Build To Last. That power, that Dunamis is intimately connected to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul penned this great prayer in Ephesians 1:18-21, I tell the Body of Christ, anytime I see a prayer in the Bible that's worth your taking it and praying it for yourself. That's exactly what we're supposed to do.

So the Apostle Paul prays there, "I pray also that the eyes of your heart." Did you know that your heart has eyes? And that sometimes your eyes can be closed to the things that God wants to give you that you can be in slumber? "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be opened." And he wants us to know three things, but I'm going to highlight the one today that, "Your eyes would be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints." And here's the one I want you to underline today, "And his incomparably great." Not just great, "His incomparably great." There's nothing that compares to this. "His incomparably great power," Dunamis, for just a few of us. Not what he said.

Congregation: Everyone.

Pastor Cal: "For us who believe." Do you believe?

Congregation: Yes.

Pastor Cal: And if you believe, Paul says, "I want your eyes opened to the power that is available for you." They said, "Well, what kind of power is that Paul?" Guys, a little more than a half stick of dynamite or quarter stick of dynamite. That power is like the working of His mighty strength which He exerted in Christ when he raised Him from the dead.

Congregation: Yeah.

Pastor Cal: I want you to know resurrection power, knockout power in your life. In other words, Christ's Resurrection is not to be merely the celebration of an event in the past, but the realization of a power in the present that can knock out what doesn't belong in your life and release you into the fullness of God's purpose for you.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Cal: That's the power I came to tell you about today. And so we're going to look at several realities that can be yours today through His power. Why? Because He's resurrected. The power is available. I want to embrace this in my life and let it be released, so that I'm walking in that power. Here's reality number one. Some of you need this one today. Christ's power can detonate your despair. Did you drag a little despair in here today? Always every Sunday, I know that there's people that, "That's

what I'm battling. I'm battling despair."

Guys, I want you to know that when His power as it work in your life, it infuses every situation with hope. And it gives you a confidence to know that you can face and you can overcome anything life throws at you. It gives you the power of a tenacious spirit to hang in there, and believe for God's best no matter what. You become like the Apostle Paul who says, "Even though it's beatings, imprisonments, riots," opposition everywhere he goes. Look, he says in Colossians 1:29 of his ministry endurance, he says, "To this end, I labor," and he piles up the power words. "I labor struggling with all of his energy," and here's the Dunamis, "Which so powerfully works in me."

Paul says, "It's not that I don't get discouraged. It's not that I don't get opposition. It's not that I don't run into things that I go, 'This cannot be God's will.' But I want to tell you this, I have learned not to let despair win the day, because His power is at work within me." And part of how you get there, you made the choice today to come here. And I'm so glad that we sang that song about the joy of the Lord being my strength. You know where that's taken from? That's a word from Nehemiah, Nehemiah 10:8. I'm sorry, 8:10, is where he says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

I remember as we're singing that how John Eldridge, who lives down here in Colorado, Springs. I've loved his writings and he's taught me much, but I remember him saying, he was in a bookstore one day and he was fighting despair. He was fighting depression. He was just under this heavy cloud, didn't know how to get out from under it. And he ran into this lady who was just a real godly woman. He knew her and they began to talk, "How're you doing John?" "Ah, I'm just really kind of struggling." And then

she said, just kind of matter of fact, and he said it went off like a dynamite in him. She said, "Well you know John, the enemy's target is always our joy." And he said, "All of a sudden everything became clear."

Well, of course. That's why this, and that's why this, and that's why this. And all of this stuff coming against me, because if the enemy can take my joy, he takes my strength. And how does God fill us up with joy? You made the choice to come today and begin to praise Him. And all of a sudden, some joy starts beginning to be released. And because you put yourself in that place, God says, "Now I can release some Dunamis in your heart today, 'cause that's what you need and that's going to detonate the despair that you brought in here. I'm going to get you back into a tenacious spirit to believe Me for what I've said will come. So stay in there."

This is Nehemiah as he's building the wall, he's coming into all kinds of opposition. Look what he prayed in Nehemiah 6:9, "Now strengthen my hands." Boy, I got to pray that every day, "Strengthen my hands, Lord." Why? Because we get worn down. Despair begins to chip away at our soul. "Lord, strengthen my hands." Guys, you can pray that and not that is God's will to strengthen and empower you, because He has commanded you in Ephesians 6:10. Look at this, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power," the Dunamis, "Of his might."

I like to stop there and go, "Does God want you to be strong in the power of His might?" Absolutely, it's the will of God. And when you pray anything according to His will, you know that He hears you. And if you know that He hears you, you have what

He asked you. You can begin to say, "Thank you Lord Jesus, that is Your will for me to walk in that power today, so I receive it so that I can release it." And so, He's going to get you out of despair today so you can say, "Okay, the problem's not solved, but He's putting something in me so that I can continue to keep on walking, when the enemy's saying, 'You might as well quit.'" I call that a tenacious spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Cal: I about died laughing when I first came across this story a few years ago. Moms, those of you who have small kids can no doubt relate. This mother wrote, "My kids are like camels. They can play all day in the blazing sun and never think of water. But at bedtime, as soon as their heads hit the pillow, suddenly they discover their unquenchable thirst." You all know, don't you? She said, "One evening, my three-year-old son and I had been through the regular bedtime routine, of story, prayer, hugs. And then as my hand slid down the light switch, I hear, 'Mommy, I want a gink.'

"He couldn't say drink, which I thought was kind of cute, gink, but I was firm. I said, 'You just had a drink when you brushed your teeth. Now it's time to go to sleep.'" She says, "At last the kids were in bed. Peace, silence. I sat in my favorite chair and began to sort through the mail. Then again, from the darkness, 'I want a gink.'" She says, "Gink lost some of its cuteness. No water. Go to sleep. Quietness reigned for at least 60 seconds. And then, 'Mommy, I want a gink.' 'Be quiet.' 'I want a gink.'"

She says, "Now I knew how Moses felt in the wilderness, with a million people all crying out at once, 'We want a gink.' Gink was no longer cute at all. I yelled down

the hallway into the darkness, 'If I hear you ask for a drink one more time, if I hear one sound from you, I'm going to come down there and spank you. I'm not kidding. Now be quiet and go to sleep.' Quietness at last. You could have heard a pin drop." She said, "It was so silent I couldn't concentrate on the mail. And then, the still small voice of a child who smelled victory, 'Mommy, when you come in here to spank me, could you bring me a gink?"

Don't you love that? I call that a tenacious spirit, and I want you just kind of to flip it today. So when the enemy is telling you, "You're not getting something of what God has already promised to you," you stay tenacious and you say, "I don't care what you do enemy, but I'm going after what God has told me I can have. And I need a drink of His water. I need a drink of His Spirit. I need a drink of His power, and He has said, I can have it." That's how you win over that kind of despair that is nipping at your soul by the resurrection power of Jesus. I claim your power in my life to detonate this despair and keep me going. God wants you to know that kind of power.

Here's reality number two, Christ's power can route your regrets. I know every time I preach, there's people that are fighting regret, looking through the rear-view mirror of what happened yesterday and just can't get free today. A few years ago, an email was circulating called, The City of Regret. It read, "I had not really planned to take a trip this year, yet I found myself packing anyway. And off I went, dreading it. I was on another guilt trip. I booked my reservation on Wish-I-Had Airlines. I didn't check my bags through. Everyone carries their baggage on this airline. And I had to drag it for what seemed like miles in the Regret City Airport. And I could see that people from

all over the world were there with me, limping along under the weight of bags they had packed themselves."

"I caught a cab to Last Resort Hotel, the driver taking the whole trip backward, looking over his shoulder. And there I found the ballroom, where my event would be held. It's called the Annual Pity Party. As I checked in, I saw that all my old colleagues were on the guest list. The Done Family, Woulda, Coulda and Shoulda Done. Both of the Opportunities, Missed Opportunity and Lost Opportunity. All the Yesterdays would be there too, too many to count. But all with Sad Stories, Shattered Dreams, Broken Promises would be there and also, Don't Blame Me and Couldn't Help It. And of course, hours and hours of entertainment would be provided by the renowned storyteller, It's Their Fault." They said, "As I prepared to settle in for a really long night, I realized that one person had the power to send all of those people home and break up that party, and that was me. All I had to do was return to the present and with renewed hope, welcome the new day."

I read that and I brought that today to say this to you. Listen, God doesn't want you focused on the regrets of the past that only lead to depression in the present. Some of you need to get yourself a little sign, put it up in your bathroom mirror in the morning, so that you can remember, yesterday ended last night.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Cal: You're living in today. I'm not saying there aren't some consequences of choices you made then that may be coming into today. I'm not saying there might be

some things that you need to rectify or some restitution. What I'm saying, God's plans for you are not over your shoulder. They're out here in front of you. And you can't reach those when you're living in regret. So if you're wallowing there today, then do what Nehemiah and his countrymen did. Bring your sins, bring your mistakes, bring your bad choices to God in repentance, claiming His forgiveness. And once you've surrendered them to Him, leave them at the cross and claim a new day over your life, and you will know something of His power in the place of that regret.

Some of you need to receive God's word in your spirit today from Isaiah 43:18-19. Look at this and hear him speaking it to you today. "Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past." That's a word for someone right from God's word to you today, "Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing. God's speaking that through the Spirit to some of you today, "Do not dwell in the past. I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it?"

When your mind is consumed with the regrets of your past, the wouldas, the shouldas, the couldas, the losses, the mishaps, the failures, you can easily miss the new thing God is bringing your way today. And I'm here to tell you today that Jesus Christ can deliver a knockout blow to those regrets today, if you'll surrender them to Him and you'll start living for the new things He wants to do in your life today. In your Spirit, Lord, I receive Your new thing. I receive you new thing, and I renounce the lies of regret, and I renounce the lies that are coming my way through despair. His power can detonate your despair, it can route your regrets.

Here's a great one, reality number three. Every one of us needs this one.

Christ's power can defy your deficiencies. Because you know what I know about every one of us in here? We have some deficiencies, don't we? And sometimes, the enemy just knows how to use those things to say, "See, everybody else is gifted but you. Everybody else has it all together. But who are you to think that God could use you? Look at those weaknesses you have in your life. Look at those deficiencies you in here have in your life."

So when I talk about defying your deficiencies, I mean God can take the very thing you think disqualifies you, the very thing you think He could never use, and He can transform it into something good. That's what He does. He can take your mess and make it your message. He can take your test and make it your testimony. No, He didn't remove the deficiency or the weakness. He made it an instrument of His power, his Dunamis instead.

Look at this great verse in 2 Corinthians 12:9, where the Apostle Paul is facing an obstacle of some kind, a thorn in his flesh that was tormenting him and slowing him down, and he knew to do exactly what we would do. God certainly can't want this to be going on in my life. So three times, he's begged God to take it away from him and God decides not to. And look at what He tells him instead, "My grace is sufficient for you for my power," My Dunamis, "Is made perfect in your weakness."

Do you know what God was saying there? That, "Sometimes in and particularly in your deficiencies, My power is more clearly displayed. More clearly displayed in your weakness, so that when I do through you what I do, everybody knows it was

God, not you." That's the story of His people all through the scriptures. So in spite of our obvious weaknesses or deficiency, God's saying, "I want people to marvel, because they know it was My Dunamis at work." And that's seen really clearly against the backdrop of deficiency and weakness.

A 10-year-old boy lost his arm in a devastating car accident the year before, and his mom and dad are looking for some ways to kind of encourage him and get him back into life, enrolled him in a study of judo. And so he began lessons at 10 years old with an old Japanese judo master, called a sensei. And he was doing well, but he couldn't understand why after three months of training, the master had taught him only one move. So he asked him, "Sensei, shouldn't I be learning more moves?" And the sensei replied, "This is the only move you know, but it's the only move you will ever need to know."

So still not quite understanding but trusting his teacher's wisdom, the boy kept training. And several months later, the sensei took the boy to his first tournament. Surprising himself, the boy easily won his first two matches. Of course, by this time, the crowd that's there is beginning to hear about this little guy without a left arm who's winning some matches. This is amazing, right? Third match proved to be a little more difficult, but after some time, his opponent became impatient and charged. The boy used the one move he knew, pinned him, winning the match again, credibly.

He now finds himself in the finals. And again, by this time, the whole crowd has gathered to watch the young boy without a left arm that they have all heard about now. This time his opponent in the finals, his opponent is bigger, stronger, more

experienced, far more experienced. And so for a while, it appeared as if he was over-matched, and he himself wondered if he was over-matched. And concerned that the boy might get hurt, the referee called the timeout, went to the corner, talk it over the sensei. "I don't want to see him get hurt." Sensei said, "No, let him continue. He'll be fine."

Soon after, the match resumed. His opponent made a critical mistake, dropped his guard. Instantly, the boy used his move to pin him, thus winning the match and the tournament. Wow. Incredibly, the boy without a left arm, it's news all over. He's the champion. On the way home, while the boy in the sensei were reviewing all their moves from all the different matches, the boy finally summoned the courage to ask the one question that he and I'm sure everybody else really wanted to know. He said, "Sensei, how did I win the tournament with only one move? I don't understand." The sensei responded, "Well, you won for two reasons. First, you've almost mastered one of the most difficult throws in all of judo. And second, the only known defense for that move is for your opponent to grab your left arm."

Don't you love it? Come on. His biggest weakness had become his greatest strength. That's what you call defying a deficiency and turning it into an unmitigated strength. And likewise, God's sufficiency can knock out your deficiency. So rather than getting negative about what you can't change in your life, claim the power of a Resurrected Christ in your weakness, so that that's the backdrop for which His Dunamis can be displayed to everyone else. That's what He says he'll do. Ask Him to strengthen you and His power will defy your deficiencies and give you a testimony of

God's triumph through your weakness.

Here's reality number four, Christ's power can break off your bondage. Ah, someone needs to hear this one today. 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, look at this. "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with ..." The word of God, the blood of Jesus, name of Jesus. "Weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary," look, "They have divine," Dunamis, "Divine power," to do what? "Demolish strongholds."

Stronghold is any addictive pattern thought or behavior that is inconsistent with God's will for your life, but from which you can't get free, no matter how hard you try. You've read the Bible, you've fasted, you've prayed, you've done everything you know to do, and you're discouraged because it doesn't matter what I do. I know I love Jesus, but I cannot get free. And it's keeping you from being all that you know God wants you to be. Guess what? Christ's Resurrection power can blow that thing up. And I've watched him do that with hundreds of people.

I could parade several hundreds of folks across this stage today, and have them tell you the story how they used to be bound by anger, bound by fear, bound by drugs, bound by sex, bound by porn, bound by destructive addictions, and share with you how the power of Christ has broken the chains and set them free.

I met Doug in the psych ward several years ago, after he had tried to take his life following a weekend of heavy drinking, cutting himself. His life had become a series of failed relationships, sexual infidelity, binge-drinking. So after I prayed with him that

day in the psych ward, I knew him from the gym where we both worked out, I told him that day to come see me when he got out, because I wanted to see what the real Doug looked like after Christ released His Resurrection power in me, which up to that point none of us have gotten to see yet.

He did come to see me. And one of the first things he did was surrender his life to Jesus Christ, understand his need for a Savior. And I can only tell you that over time, as I walked with him through just some of these biblical methods we use to help people break strongholds, the power of the Resurrected Christ transformed his life. And he came into agreement with God about his sin. He renounced his sexual infidelity, he renounced his alcohol use. The power of God blew up the strongholds in his life, and he has walked free to this day.

Congregation: Wow.

Pastor Cal: Yeah. And I'm here to tell you, if you are bound by something stronger than yourself, God has the power to set you free. And if you don't hear that, you're listening to a lie of the enemy. If you'll come to Jesus, renounce your sin and the power of the evil one behind that addiction, and then in Jesus' name, tell the evil one to get out and leave you alone, you'll walk free. Now, I'm not saying that it completes your maturity. No, we all have to lift our weights and do the work, but I'm telling you that there is a power in the resurrection that blows up strongholds, that finally releases you to move on free from the junk that is holding you back.

I always like to tell the church, "Do you understand? The gospel is better than I

thought, 'cause all I ever heard it's about forgiveness so I can go to heaven." And how many of you know? Many people in the church know they're forgiven but they're not free. Can I tell you, it's forgiveness that gets you in the front door. And then Jesus says, "All right, now let's walk around the rooms, and I'm going to get you free." The gospel is a gospel of forgiveness and freedom through the power of the Resurrected Lord, and He can break the bondage in your life. I'm telling you that today. Welcome Him to do that.

Reality number five, Christ's power can silence your shame. And I have to be careful here, 'cause I know there can be a good shame. Very little shame is good, but shame can give us the boundaries. Kind of like Kelly, you know what you did there was wrong. Guilt can kind of speak to us and get us back with Jesus, and shame can say, "You shouldn't have done that." What I'm talking about is toxic shame that many people in the Body of Christ carry. Guilt will say, "What you did is wrong. What you did is bad." Shame will say, "You're just a bad person." Shame will make you disgusted with yourself, putting yourself down.

I want to tell you I'm on the war path against shame in the church today, because I know many people who are forgiven but are still tormented by shame of their past. It's kind of like shame has built a monument in their mind that keeps reminding them of their past mistake, and thus they live under the condemnation of the past rather than the joy of their forgiveness. God wants you to live in the power of Romans 8:1 today. Look at this, which says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation." Guys, I took three, four years of Greek and that Greek word, no, has

a special meaning. Literally, it means no.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So if you've got condemnation going on, who are you listening to? Through His power, Jesus wants to silence the condemning voice of shame from your past so you can enjoy the peace of His forgiveness. He wants to tear down the monuments in your mind that keep reminding you of your failures. And when I talk about those monuments, it's interesting. On a Masters weekend, some of you'll probably watch the finals on the Masters today, right? And those of you who know golf, you maybe remember the name Arnold Palmer.

He's one of the greatest golfers of the PGA has ever known, as over his career, he won 95 tour events, including seven major championships. From 1960 to '63, he was the greatest golfer in the world, winning 29 PGA events. That success got him named Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year in 1960, Athlete of the Decade by the Associated Press. However, right at the peak of his success, Palmer had a meltdown one day at the 1961 Los Angeles Open, on the par-5 ninth hole. He started his day, you know how they do that sometime? They started on the 10th and so he played his 18 holes and he's finishing on the ninth, and it's a par-5.

He's just a few strokes behind. He hit a good drive. He wanted to try to put the ball in the green with his second shot, so he'd be in position to attempt a birdie or maybe even an eagle, picking up a stroke or two on the leaders. And so with his 3 Wood, Palmer hit what he believed was a good shot. But as the ball sailed, it faded to the right. It hit a pole, it bounced out of bounds onto the driving range, which meant he

had to drop a ball, take a penalty stroke, and so he tried again. This time, ball hooked to the left, flew off the course onto a road. So again, dropped a ball, took a penalty stroke. He repeated this process, hitting the ball out of bounds several times before finally, putting the ball on the green. And by then, he had accumulated 10 strokes.

Two putts later, he was finally in the hole to finish with a 12 on that hole. And because of that disastrous hole, he went from being a few strokes off the lead to not even making the cut. But here's what's amazing. Today, over 60 years later, and I brought the picture to prove it, if you go to what is now the 18th hole at the Rancho Park Golf Course in Los Angeles, you'll find a bronze plaque actually refurbished in 2017 that states, "On Friday January 6th, 1961, the first day of the 35th Los Angeles Open, Arnold Palmer, voted Golfer of the Year and Pro Athlete of the Year took a 12 on this hole." And that whole part is like capitalized, "Took a 12 on this hole." They put the plaque up there. You see that? "Took a 12 on this hole."

I share that to say, wouldn't you love to have a monument built to one of your most embarrassing moments of the past? Truth is, many of you have done just that, right here, and it holds you fast. You've built a monument to your past, serves to keep you in your place anytime you try to move forward. You messed up somehow, perhaps got pregnant out of wedlock, had an abortion, committed an adultery, wrecked your marriage, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And you walk around with a monument that says, "I, so-and-so, no longer have a right to respect myself or to expect God to use me, 'cause my past demonstrates that I am an unworthy candidate for such honor."

I declare to you today on the authority of God's word, that it does not matter what the skeletons in the closet of your past look like. When you bring a sincere heart of faith to God, repent of your sin, put your trust in the forgiveness of His grace that He provided you through the cross of Jesus Christ, renounce the shame that holds you fast, His Resurrection power will tear down those monuments and silence your shame. Some of you just need to declare it right now. In Jesus' name, I renounce the voice of shame. I renounce its lies in my life, and I command any spirits behind it to leave. I have been forgiven, I have been released, I have made new in Jesus, and I intend to walk in the freedom of His power. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor Cal: Dunamis, the Resurrection power of Jesus. I pray your eyes may be enlightened, to know that that's for you. A power that can detonate your despair, can route your regrets, can defy your deficiencies, can break your, can silence your shame. And it all starts by coming again to the cross. Some of you need to come for the first time, 'cause here's reality number six, Christ's power can fantasticize your future. Now, that's not a word, but I made it up, and it should be a word. Just like when you go to McDonald's, you want that supersized? I'll tell you what. God says, "I want to fantasticize some things for you." He wants you to enjoy a fantastic future, both in terms of quality now and duration.

Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:9, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind is conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." It's fantastic. And what we

do know is that because Jesus Christ rose victorious over the grave, He now promises that same eternal life to anyone and everyone who will put their faith and trust in Him. Look at this, the Bible says in 1 John 5:11-12, "And this is the testimony." This is God's word. "God has given us eternal life." He has made it available to you. "He has given us eternal life." But look, "This life is in the Son." Jesus possesses that life. Watch, "He who has the Son," has what? "Has life." Why? 'Cause life's in the Son.

So that means when you embrace Jesus by faith and He comes into your life, you have His life. The life of God is in the Son. And when the Son is in you, you have the life of God. Do you understand? "So He who has a son has life. He who does not have the Son of God," is missing out in the life too, because his life isn't the Son. He wants to fantasticize your future, but you've got to invite him into your life.

So God wants you to have this assurance, because the essence of the gospel message is that Jesus Christ died for your sins. He was raised again on the third day. And that by believing this message and putting your faith in Jesus Christ, His Resurrection power will give you new life right now on earth, and guarantee your future with Him forever when this life is over. My question is, do you have that assurance today? God wants you to have that assurance. Everything He's done is for your assurance. But for that to happen, for this Resurrection power to be released in you, you have to make a conscious decision to surrender your life to Him.

You got to plug into his Resurrection power. You can't earn salvation or be good enough for it. You must simply by faith, surrender your life to Christ and trust His grace. So many people think that there's something they have to do to earn salvation,

like they got to rack up enough Brownie Points with God. Listen, I always say, religion is spelled D-O. So all the things people are trying to do to impress God or get enough Brownie Points. You can't get enough Brownie Points. Christianity is spelled D-O-N-E. Jesus Christ has done everything that needs to be done for you. Will you put your faith in Him?

Now listen, I try to do a lot of good things, but I'm not trying to do them in order to be saved. I do them because I am saved. It's the power of God in me. Cal, I want you to do this, want you to do that. I do it, not because I'm trying to earn anything from God. I'm just doing it because his life's at work in me.

Congregation: God bless you.

Pastor Cal: See? So don't think that you can earn by doing, earn by trying to be good enough. You can't get enough Brownie Points to earn your way with a Holy God. It's like the guy who died and went to heaven. So St. Peter met him at the gate and said, "Here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me the good things you've done, I'll then give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on its comparative worth. And when you reach 100 points, you can enter." The guy thinks, "Well, I've got a pretty impressive resume. Let's see how this goes."

So he started thinking real hard and he said, "Okay, how about the fact that I was married to the same woman for 50 years? I never cheated on her, even in my heart." Peter says, "Man, that's wonderful. That's worth three points." He goes, "Three points? That's all?" And he's like, "You didn't know my wife. Well, how about the fact

that I attended church all my life, and I supported this ministry through serving, and I even gave a 10th of my income. I was a tither." Peter says, "That's terrific." He said, "Attending church is worth two points, and I'll even throw in three big points for tithing. That's impressive."

The guy couldn't believe it. He's doing some addition here, and he's already used up what he'd hoped would give him most of his points. And it's like, "I've only got eight." So he pulled out the ringer, "All right," he said, "I started a soup kitchen in my city, and I worked in a shelter for homeless veterans." Peter says, "That's fantastic. That's good for five more points." And now the guy knew he was in trouble, if he had to come up with 100 points. So he cried out in desperation, "Five points?" He goes, "At this rate, the only way I'm going to make it in is by the Grace of God." And instantly, Peter said, "Bingo, 100 points. Come on in."

That's how any of us make it. I just want the things I do for Him to be, "God, I'm just grateful for the day. You saved me. And now what I do for You is just an expression of my gratitude, through the power of God." You don't earn your Brownie Points. God's already done everything He can do. He put Jesus on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin, brought Him back from the dead, so He could release Resurrection power in your life. Do you know that power today?

I want every head bowed, every eye closed. I'm going to pray for all of you today, because this message just goes across the board in a lot of different ways. But for those of you who've never understood, and you're sitting here and, "Cal, I've been trying to earn my way with God. I didn't understand that it's already done for me. I

have to just put my faith in that. Invite Jesus Christ into my life." And if you've never done that, do it today. Just open your heart right now.

Say, Lord, I've never understood this before, but I understand it today. I've been trying to earn my Brownie Points with you. And I know I could never do enough to earn my way with an absolutely Holy God. I have sinned. I have fallen short many, many times, and You made a way for me to be forgiven. I believe that Jesus Christ was the Divine Son of God, that He died on a cross for my sin. I confess that today. And I believe that He was raised from the dead and that if I'll, by faith, open my heart to Him, Lord, You said I would have life. I asked for that Resurrection life to be released in me today, by the power of your Holy Spirit. So Father, I'm saying, come into my life, release that Resurrection power and the freedom and the fruit of Your forgiveness in my life today by the power of your Holy Spirit, and help me to follow You from this day forward.

Friend, if you prayed that prayer, He heard you. He's releasing that life in you right now. Just thank Him, thank Him, thank Him. And then there's some of you, you've known Him for a long time, but you resonated with some of this today. "Cal, man, I've been living in regret. I've been hearing the lies about my deficiencies. I can't seem to overcome the shame." I want to pray for you right now. Father, in the name of Jesus, we speak Your name into every one of those places where the enemy has sowed his lies. We renounce those lies in Jesus' name. We welcome You to release again your Resurrection power. Lord, to blow up strongholds in our thinking, where we've come into agreement with the lies of the enemy. I claim Your power, Your truth, Your joy,

Your peace, and Your hope. I receive it again today. Father, have Your way in me and
thank You for Your