Pastor Michael O'Neill. October 11, 2026

Resurrection Reality
Part One

John 12:24; Romans 6:4-11

1. United with Christ in Death

2. Raised to Walk in Newness of Life

3. Consider Yourselves Dead to Sin and Alive to God

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Resurrection Reality, Part 1[1]

My testimony/baptism

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. The God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead is nearer than your next heartbeat. He is not reluctant nor distant. He is ready to speak life where you've heard only the sound of regret, ready to steady trembling hands and tired hearts.

In two weeks we will celebrate baptism: picture the baptistry right here as another person approaches the steps. Everyone is silent and the room holds its breath. And in that simple act—under the water and up again—heaven's headlines are declared: the old is gone, the new has begun. What looks ordinary becomes holy, not because of the water, but because of the declaration of what the Resurrected One has done in that person's life. The old life is dead.

Open your eyes.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." It sounds severe until you realize what it is that dies: the tyranny of sin, the claim of shame, the lie that you're still chained to who you used to be. Jesus said in John 12:24…

> "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." (John 12:24, niv)

In other words, you can keep your life the way it is now without Christ, and you'll always just be a single seed. But if you will die to yourself and let Christ's resurrection life live in you, you will have abundant life! *Christ calls us not to less life, but to real life.* The invitation is not to try harder but to trust deeper. Not to make a few moral adjustments, but to receive an entirely new identity. The change that your heart craves can be a resurrection reality!

In Romans 6, Paul doesn't hand us positive thinking or a pep talk. He offers us union with Jesus Christ—tied to Christ in his death, tied to him in his risen life. Your past may protest. Your feelings may fluctuate. But the gospel is more sturdy than your moods and more mighty than your memories. You have been brought into Christ, wrapped in his righteousness, and welcomed into his resurrection life. So when the enemy points to your failures, you can point to the empty tomb. When your conscience replays old scenes, remember the cross has already rendered its verdict: paid in full.

Let's be honest: some of us walked in today with heavy labels hanging around our necks—"angry," "anxious," "addicted," "ashamed." Jesus doesn't hand you a Sharpee to scribble over those labels; he hands you a *new* name and a *new* nature. He doesn't patch up the old; he makes you new. Listen carefully and you'll hear the Father say, "You're mine, and you're

[1] Based from various articles from sermoncentral.com

alive in my Son." You can step into tomorrow with a clean conscience and a clear commission, where the habits that have haunted you don't have the final say.

If you've been baptized, think back to that moment. You go under. It's quiet. Then you rush up, water cascading, face shining, the church family applauding, people wiping tears of joy over you. Why? Because we're witnessing grace at work, Jesus at work, resurrection at work. That is not theater; that is truth. That is our story—yours and mine—if we are in Christ. So let's listen to the Word that tells us who we are and what we have in him.

Let me read Romans 6:4-11 to us, and as I do, would you stand with me?

> For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:4-11, nlt)

May God empower his Word into our hearts by His Spirit. You can be seated. Let's jump right into this text and learn about resurrection reality, starting with…

1. United with Christ in Death

United with Jesus means his death counts for us in a real way – not only as an example but as a shared event that God counts as ours. The cross reaches into our past and names us as people who already died with him. This is how God breaks the back of the old life. He joins us to his Son so that our story is tied to his.

I know that "death" language sounds heavy, but it is honest. Sin in our lives never fades with time. Death is the only way out. It always demands payment. But Jesus stepped under that weight and carried it to the end. When he breathed his last, the bill was stamped "paid." God does not split the bill with us. The entire debt is paid by the work of his Son. So the person who trusts him stands under a finished sentence. The court is quiet. The case is closed. You walk away free.

Death also means an end to a rule. Sin used to call the shots. It ordered our wants and words and actions. When we die with Jesus it severs that line. The old master can still shout for our attention, but it can no longer force us to obey. There is new power that begins to call to our hearts and minds. Desires start to change. Habits begin to loosen. A new way of life takes shape from the inside out. This is resurrection life. This is not a feeling we work up. God made it real when he joined us to his Son. Faith receives it. Faith counts it true. Faith learns to say, "I died with him," even on hard days. Then the mouth and the mind and the body begin to move in ways that fit that truth. The Spirit helps us. He brings the death

of Jesus into our daily experience. Old patterns lose their grip. New steps get more steady every day.

That's why baptism is such a powerful picture. Burial has a feel of finality; something ended and a chapter closed. It's a sign that is public and it says we were carried with Jesus into death and brought out with him into life. The water does not cause the change. God already did the work in Christ, but still the sign matters. It marks us in front of others. It reminds our hearts when we forget. It says, "That old life is in the ground." The body goes under. The body comes up. The same person stands there but a different claim now rests on that life. The old bond has been cut. A new way has begun.

Paul also writes about the "old self" being crucified so that the "body of sin" would be brought to nothing. He is talking about our old, sin-filled life. The "body of sin" means the way sin used our actual bodies to carry out its orders. Eyes that wandered. Hands that grabbed. Mouths that spoke words of hurt at others. Minds that soak in the brine of cynicism and criticism. Crucifixion brings that regime to an end. God's goal is clear; we would no longer serve sin as slaves. Then our same bodies become tools in a new service. Eyes can notice need. Hands can bless. Words can build. The cross makes that possible.

Paul says, "the one who has died is freed from sin." This is court language. Sin still makes offers. It can promise pleasure. It can whisper fear. It can bring up old files. But it stays in the locked cell while we walk away. This freedom is real. Temptations come, but we are free to say no because we've already died to sin's old demand.

Paul then calls us to "consider" ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ. "Considering" means a choice of the mind that takes God's word as the truest word. Resurrection life means we declare it in prayer. Declare it when you feel the pull of sin. Consider it when you get up and when you lie down. The act of considering is not pretend; it is cooperating with grace. It trains the will. It guides the body. When anger rises, you speak to it as a thing without authority. When fear presses, you answer with the oath God has sworn in his Son. When old shame climbs back, you hold up the death of Jesus as the verdict over your past. This is how resurrection reality begins to look like something you can see. It shapes what you do with your time. It leads your choices of screens and food and money and sex and power. It brings your days into the light of the cross and the empty tomb.

2. Raised to Walk in Newness of Life

From here the focus is life. Not theory; a walk. Verse four says:

> "So we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

Paul chooses a simple picture. Walk. It speaks to the course of a day. Steps, errands, conversations, decisions. In that soil, the gospel grows.

"Newness of life" signals freshness from God. Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, and that glory sets the scene for our steps. It brings a different quality to ordinary hours. Clean motives. A steady purpose. A quiet strength when you feel thin.

Walking means movement. A direction, a place, a path. Some days feel quick, some feel slow. The text encourages steady steps. The newness shows up in errands, emails, commutes, mealtimes. The heart says yes to God's way, and the feet follow.

Verses 9–10 give the anchor. "We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin." His risen life is secure. Fixed. Unshaken. Reality.

"Now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God." That line sets the tone of the Christian life. Aim every decision "for the glory of God." Think of it in small choices. How you spend an evening. What you say when stressed. Where your eyes rest. The risen Lord lives for the glory of God, and this orients *our* days.

This aim grows into a pattern. Pray with that aim. Work with that aim. Rest with that aim. Let your calendar, your budget, your words, and your private thoughts share the same direction.

Paul writes about being "raised to life as (Jesus) was" (Romans 6:5). Likeness is shape. A family resemblance. A way of life that bears the imprint of Easter morning.

That likeness appears in a clear conscience and a bright hope. It looks like patience with difficult people. It looks like kindness that moves first. It looks like courage that does not need an audience. The resurrection shapes what we love and how we love.

There is also forward movement here. The same Lord who rose will raise his people. That future spills backward into the present. It steadies your walk today. It lifts your face when the way feels long.

The Greek word for "to walk" is "per-ee-pat-eh'-o." In Romans 6:4 the verb appears as "peh-ree-pah-TAY-soh-men," a call to live *a certain way*. The verb often describes conduct as a pattern. Colossians 2:6 uses it for daily life in Christ: "walk in him." 1 Thessalonians 4:1 uses it for a life that pleases God. Ephesians 5:2 speaks of "walk in love," highlighting love as the path and the water we swim in. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, "walk by faith," stressing trust as the mode of life. Romans 8:4 uses the verb for a life aligned with the Spirit. 1 John 1:7 says, "walk in the light," showing a life open to God's presence and truth. Across these texts, "per-ee-pat-eh'-o" marks ongoing, habitual conduct shaped by God's grace and purpose.

Resurrection reality grows through ordinary obedience. Tell the truth when a half-truth would be easier. Keep a promise when it costs you. Give thanks when you feel overlooked. Serve when no one notices. These are small steps, but they are part of the same walk.

Romans 6:4 stays practical. Walk. In newness. Today. The path is made of many little choices that share one direction. Over time, those steps form a story. A life that reflects the risen Lord.

Hope stays steady because the center is steady. Verse nine says "Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again." (Romans 6:9). That line calms the heart. It gives you courage to take the next step when pressure rises.

Verse ten: "now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God." (Romans 6:10). Let that sentence shape your thoughts. Make plans with that in mind. Face conflict with that in

mind. Receive joy with that in mind. Newness – resurrection reality – keeps going, one faithful step after another.

3. Consider Yourselves Dead to Sin and Alive to God

Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God means freedom with a new address, a new allegiance, and a new way to think. Scholars point out that Paul treats sin like a ruling power, not just a bad habit. In simple terms, sin acted like a master, handing out orders and wages. Resurrection reality means that master is removed and you live under a different authority now.

"Consider" means count it true. The word translated "consider" comes from an accounting term (logizomai). The most basic definitions explain it as "to credit to an account" or "to regard as true." That helps. You aren't pretending; you are posting a fact to your mental ledger. The crucified-and-risen Christ changes the books, and you update the balance. New Testament scholars also note that Paul describes sin as a regime that can "rule," which means freedom involves a transfer of dominion. Think of it as a change of employer and a change of kingdom. So you talk to your thoughts like a coach talks to a team: I count myself dead to sin. I count myself alive to God. I count on the finished work of Jesus. Say it morning, noon, and night. Say it when cravings whisper. Say it when shame circles back. The old regime sent commands; you owe it no obedience. The new King speaks life; you give him your ear. Consider it daily, consider it deliberately, consider it decisively. And then act like it: unsubscribe from what feeds temptation, unfollow what stirs old patterns, unlearn what trained your reflexes. Theology fuels practice; counting shapes choosing.

Alive to God means available to God. Union with Christ is the engine here. Theologians from Calvin to contemporary scholars call this "union" the bond by which all that belongs to Jesus is available for those who belong to Jesus. You share his death to sin; you share his life toward the Father. Again, Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it plainly: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." What do I give up to follow Jesus? Everything. But what do I get in return? What Jesus has. What does Jesus have? EVERYTHING! It means setting your whole self at God's disposal. So you give God your mind—feed it with truth, guard it with boundaries, aim it at what builds love. You give God your body—eyes, tongue, hands, schedule, devices. You give God your relationships—marriage, friendships, coworkers, neighbors. Christians signal this availability in baptism, a public pledge that their story belonged to Jesus' story. Scholars describe this as participation: you participate in his death to sin's rule and participate in his living power for obedience. So set your alarm with purpose. So set your calendar with purpose. So set your budget with purpose. Alive to God means respond when he prompts, speak when he opens a door, serve when a need appears.

Train your habits so freedom sticks. Grace welcomes you, and grace also trains you. Practice makes patterns, and patterns make it easier to choose well under pressure. Build a rule of life that fits your season. Start small and stay steady. Daily Scripture. Say short prayers in every transition: before a meeting, before a meal, before you open a message thread. Weekly rhythms that carry weight: worship with your church, confession with a trusted friend, generosity that hurts a bit, a sabbath that includes both rest and delight. Researchers in habit formation talk about cues and routines; Christian teachers have said

the same for centuries through liturgy and disciplines. Tie your "consider" to cues you already have: every time you turn a doorknob, whisper, "I belong to Jesus." Every time you buckle your seatbelt, say, "I'm alive to God." Every time you feel the first flicker of temptation, slow your breathing, call on the Lord by name, and do the next right thing.

Step into serving. Remove apps that bait you. Restructure your commute if the old route drags you past old triggers. Replace empty time with purposeful time: scripture memory while walking, worship while cooking, a phone call to encourage someone else when you feel low. And serve. Serve with your hands, serve with your words, serve with your resources. Scholars note that Paul's language of presentation carries a temple flavor—bodies offered to God for holy use. So offer your skills and resources to your church, your table to your neighbors, your wallet to the poor, your prayers to the hurting. Action reinforces identity. When you serve, you experience your freedom in motion.

Take these steps this week: – Every morning, speak this out loud three times: "I count myself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Here are some ideas:

- Identify two triggers and set two boundaries before tonight.
- Share your commitment with a mature believer and ask for a five-minute check-in on two agreed days.
- Put one act of service on your calendar in the next seven days.
- End each day by thanking God for one temptation resisted, one truth remembered, and one person loved.

Friends, keep looking at the One who loves you most. His kindness isn't distant or conditional — it's the steady, stubborn love that will meet you in your fear, your failure, and your longing. Walk out of this place not trying to perform for him but resting in the truth that he delights in you, pursues you, and is making all things new in you. Let that love shape how you speak, how you forgive, and how you hope. This is resurrection reality.

My life in this world hasn't always been easy after I stepped my sin-self aside and into resurrection reality; in fact, at times I've had to make *more* difficult decisions as I've walked daily in obedience to Jesus. But don't mistake "more difficult" for "harder" because I'm yoked to the One who said,:

> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30, niv)

It might have been more difficult, but the results and the rewards of resurrection reality are out of this world.

Prayer

Benediction:

Go in the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Father's steady love hold you, the Son's life renew you, and the Spirit's power lead you into hope and obedience this week as you walk in resurrection reality. Amen.

Life Group Questions
Resurrection Reality Part One
Week of October 11, 2026

1. Do you have a conversion story that is different or similar to Pastor Mike's?
2. Read Romans 6:
3. **A New Identity in Christ:** Romans 6:4–11 teaches that we are united with Christ in His death and resurrection. What does it mean to you to be "dead to sin and alive to God," and how does this truth challenge the way you might tend to see yourself?
4. **Freedom from the Past:** The sermon reminds us that labels like "angry," "anxious," "addicted," or "ashamed" do not have the final say in our lives. What past failure, struggle, or label can be difficult to move beyond, and how can the truth of the gospel help you see yourself differently?
5. **Recognizing Sin's Power:** The sermon explains that sin may still tempt us, but it no longer has the authority to rule over us. Where do you find it most difficult to resist old patterns or temptations, and what might it look like to live in the freedom Christ has given you?
6. **Walking in Newness of Life:** Resurrection life is demonstrated through everyday choices, such as speaking truth, showing kindness, keeping promises, and serving others. What is one ordinary area of your daily life where God may be calling you to reflect the character of Jesus more clearly?
7. **Putting Faith into Practice:** The sermon encourages us to "consider" ourselves dead to sin and alive to God by deliberately believing and acting on what God says is true. What practical habit, boundary, or spiritual discipline could help you live more consistently in this truth this week?
8. **Living for God's Glory:** Romans 6:10 says that Christ now lives for the glory of God. If you approached your relationships, work, finances, and use of time with the goal of glorifying God, what is one specific change you might make this week?
9. Close in prayer for each other to walk in resurrection reality.