

**Sermon Series: Easter  
Title: Resurrection DNA  
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Intro

We're celebrating the 'what happened next?' of Easter. Jesus predicted he would die & be raised to life, then return to the Father and the Father would send the spirit – the situation we now live in.

I read a phrase in a magazine the other day 'we've got resurrection DNA' and it really got me thinking. Not just about the impact & power of the resurrection for us, but also what it means to have the same DNA as the divine Trinity running through my spiritual veins! We often speak of being part of God's family (Covenant image), last Sunday we focused on the truth that we are the hugely loved children of God, not slaves but sons, not orphans but heirs. So today we're going to focus on what we are heirs to/of.

What is the family DNA which you and I share with the mighty Trinity? What does DNA mean? Definition "The material inside the nucleus of cells that carries genetic information." The hereditary material in humans. Contains the genetic instructions to an organism, for building & maintaining it. DNA speaks of that which is passed on, inherited from the family to which you belong. And we know that we're in the family of God now – precious inheritors of life, sons & daughters of the king of kinds because of the power of the cross and the resurrection.

**When we became followers of Jesus we had a spiritual transplant – new DNA was implanted in us by the power of the Holy Spirit** (2 Corinthians 1:21-23). We know we've got the same spirit in us which raised Christ from the dead – so, among other aspects, we've got Resurrection DNA!

So what does it mean to have Resurrection DNA?

Reading: Eph 1:17-21

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may 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 his incomparably great power for us who believe. **That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come."

Same spirit in us

The bible is clear that believers & followers of Jesus have the same resurrection spirit active within them, the same power (also Rom 8:11), the same spirit that defies the earthly laws of what is 'possible' so that apparently impossible things break out "on earth as it is in heaven". And Paul's prayer in Ephesians is clear that we should be praying to know it, to experience it, to have our eyes and heart opened to comprehend the full extent of what it means for us to have this same resurrection DNA in our lives and futures.

As we think of the 'what happened next...' after Easter, just think of the effect of those first disciples of Jesus witnessing the resurrection, then being 'clothed with [the same] power from on high' (Luke 24:49) a few days later. Because of the miracle of Christ's resurrection, Jesus' depressed and disappointed disciples were instantly transformed. They began to preach the gospel with power, signs and wonders to accompany their claims. The detractors and sceptics were totally unable to refute the central claim of the good news – that resurrection was real, so death had lost its sting (1 Cor 15:55). They could not produce the body of Jesus Christ and put a stop to Christianity. Many of the early disciples of Jesus willingly suffered martyrdom for this faith. **And the resurrection of Jesus was at the heart of their preaching.**

Why? **Without the resurrection, there is no Christianity.** (repeat)

It's a futile dead religion, a waste of your time and mine, if Jesus did not rise from the dead by the power of God's holy spirit, and conquer the power and future of sin and death. (see 1 Cor 15). We might as well pick any other 'good moral teacher' to pick up a few tips on life.

But you and I know that there is a dynamic side to Christianity, an over-arching hope that fills our hearts even in times of trouble. We know that whatever the situation gets to in human terms, there is always a better future ahead in Christ Jesus. Resurrection is at the heart of Christianity. Resurrection is an integral part of the DNA of what it is to be a follower of Jesus, and what the faith is to which we hold, even 2000 years later.

**“The Christian life is not found on the Cross. It is found *because of the Cross.*”** (Bill Johnson *When Heaven Invades Earth*, p.145). The cross isn't the end, it's the beginning [as it was for Jesus too] of life in all its fullness, and life eternal.

Power from on high

Passing note: Resurrection & raised from the dead - if you want to read more – see 1 Cor 15

The first chapters of Acts record the dramatic change in those early disciples, after they'd got their DNA transplant by the power of the spirit at Pentecost.

Luke 24:45-49 (road to Emmaus)

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

The word power = *dunamis* – speaks of the miracle realm. Greek root = *dunamai*, means “ability”. We're clothed with God's ability.

*The power for our Christian life in the present is the power of his resurrection.* [See Eph 1:19-21 & Rom 6:4]. People ask, "How can we live this Christian life?" We can live it by the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

The first Disciples started quickly to exhibit and operate in the same resurrection power and ability, without actually trying very hard! They didn't know much about what was going on. They hadn't got the theology right – that took centuries! But they had faith and they lived like it, they put it into action. The sick were healed, the lepers cleansed, the unbelievers convinced, the gentiles reached, earthly slaves were set free inside their minds and hearts, rulers and kings addressed about who real was KING over all.

**Let me ask you: do you have faith in this stuff? Do you believe it?**

It's serious! Where you stand on this could mean life or death. It could mean the difference between another human being sick or being healed. It could mean the difference between Sheffield heading towards decay or towards spiritual and material regeneration. It could mean the difference between your neighbour having something to live for next week rather than nothing to live for.

Those early disciples realised the significance of their resurrection DNA, and they set about quickly replicating it, reproducing it, in as many others around them as they possibly could! So the early disciples became the early church, became the global church.

What is faith?

- Not just calling out to God in times of desperation – lots of people cry out to God in times like that, and that's important
- Faith is also having eyes to see, and ears to hear God's heart in the everyday
  - What are you saying to me today God during this business meeting?
  - Where is your kingdom at hand, aching to break in to my friends I'm having coffee with?
  - What is the cry of my neighbour's heart and what can I do about it in Jesus' name?

GROUP BRAINSTORM “What does it mean to you to have resurrection DNA?” Give examples of where its been in action & where you might need it...

### Resurrection can mean many things

- Spiritual rebirth - for us and the promise of it for others (mission) from death to life
- Renovation of the Heart - The spirit makes us more like Christ continually (if we let him)
- Turning situations around – redeeming them for good
  - Rom 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”
  - Not just around us (by G's Spirit) but THROUGH US & BY US – works, words, wonders because we have the same spirit/DNA
  - In KC over the past year we've experienced significant breakthrough in praying for conception and the health of unborn babies
- Redeeming whole 'powers' like companies, governments, regimes, organisations – engaging with society's structures/powers rather than disengaging bc we're Christians

### Where might we be lacking in resurrection DNA?

- Spiritual gifts
- “life to the full” (John 10:10)
- Miracles
- Sense of urgency
- Normal life – work, friends, Tesco

### Addressing mindset

I want to address one aspect in particular, and that is the 'impossible' element of the resurrection, and therefore the power for the impossible which is available to us as 'the normal Christian life'. **We must address our mindset to believe & live like this.**

“It is abnormal for a Christian not to have an appetite for the impossible. It has been written into our spiritual DNA to hunger for the impossible around us to bow at the name of Jesus.” (Johnson, p25)

Its more than being good people, and internal-focused changed which God loves to do too. Good character is vital & at the heart of our ministries, but “power revolutionises the world around us. Until the Church returns to Jesus' model for true revolutionaries, we will continue to be recognised by the world merely as nice people – while it is overcome with disease and torment, on its way to hell.” (p.107)

**You don't have to wait** till you've got a perfect Christ-like character to pursue in words, works *and wonders*. The disciples didn't! A few weeks after Peter denied Jesus during his arrest, he was out in the streets proclaiming his resurrection and healing the sick!

You don't have to act and feel so bad all the time! Sure, we're all on a journey of character development We are right to be aware of our repetitive sins, and where we fall short of God's standards in life – absolutely. **But you don't need to wallow in them!** Don't always focus on the need for the cross – focus on the victory we've all inherited by the cross. Jesus didn't die on the cross so that you have to still be concerned or held by sins which you've confessed and asked forgiveness for. Remember we are sons and heirs, not slaves and orphans.

**Christlike character will develop when we come into contact with the *power/anoointing* (HS).** When we stop striving and start being radically obedient.

- Eg. praying for deliverance
  - We've noticed that even long-time Christians can get visionless after a while and start to question their faith, or the way we do church etc
  - **The best remedy for that is to get out and do the stuff!**
  - You won't have a problem believing Jesus is real and active once you've prayed demons out of people!

The power of the cross is not to be kept in a box, or kept for professionals like me! When you pick up a bible – don't ask just about emotional healing & self-esteem (we covered this partly last wk), ask this question "*where's the trigger, and how do I fire it?*"

#### The purpose of power

The purpose of this HS power is not just to overcome sin but also for boldness for the miraculous & the impossible. **That's the normal Christian life.**

Part of our problem I think is that we're accustomed to only attempting things for God which are not impossible. Let's not stop short of a life of resurrection power.

Some Xians misunderstand the call to self-denial and aim to crucify their sinful nature & just embrace brokenness at the cross without joy, without the dynamic power element of living life by the spirit.

Instead, we must follow Jesus all the way – to a lifestyle empowered by the resurrection! Let's not just look **BACK** at the redeemer who **WAS** – let's also always be looking **FORWARD** at the redeemer who **IS**

#### How do we respond?

- Call to faith
- Prayer for where you need resurrection power
- Identify & commit to seeking more of the DNA (eg. faith for the 'impossible')
- Am I seeking to multiply this DNA?