

SERIES: “i Worldview”

i-Live - Romans 6:4

The Bible tells us that man has always feared death. But Jesus gives us the reason to overcome that fear by offering us resurrection. How can we lay hold of that promise and how does it change our lives?

We've been talking about iPods the past few weeks, and as we've mentioned before, iPods are a wondrous plaything, capable of storing and playing thousands of your personal favorite songs at the touch of button. But iPods do not magically perform this service. They need power.

Where do iPods get their power from? (batteries). That's right, just like numerous other electric devices, iPods run on batteries. Fortunately, due to the wonder of science, iPods are powered by rechargeable lithium-ion batteries that can play music on some iPods for up to 14 hours on a charge. And these wondrous power sources can be recharged up to 500 times and have an estimated lifespan of 3 years. And as I was researching that information, I discovered that a new technology is now available in some applications (nanowire lithium-ion batteries) that could increase the playing power of the iPod 10 times (140 hrs per charge).

You could say: the life of the iPod is its battery. Without that battery there is no life, no power... no music. However, as I was researching this topic online I noticed that there was one issue that some users complained a lot about. Do you think you know what that is? That's right – the durability of their iPod's batteries.

Back in September of 2004, Casey Neistat of New York City discovered that the battery in his 1st-generation 5-gigabyte iPod could no longer hold a charge for more than an hour. So he called Apple. Unfortunately for him, Apple basically advised him to buy a new iPod (their prices at the time ranged from \$300 to \$500 a piece) because they didn't have a battery replacement policy at the time. Neistat was upset. And he decided that – since Apple wasn't going to replace the battery for him, he'd do it himself. He bought an off brand battery for \$50, set down to open his iPod... and promptly broke it. Now, it didn't matter what kind of battery he had, it would never work again.

Neistat was so infuriated that he started an internet site called ipodsdirtysecret.com which featured a video of him spray-painting the phrase: "iPod's unreplaceable battery lasts only 18 months" all over lower Manhattan. That got Apple's attention, and they began offering a replacement service for \$99. (Just as a disclaimer here: Apple is consistently ranked #1 in product quality and support by leading consumer groups, such as Consumer Reports).

APPLY: Now I don't blame Apple for the problem. They figured a battery's only going to last so long anyway... so why get so upset? But in spite of the fact that it's a fact of life that a battery will eventually age and die they soon discovered... people did get a little upset. People don't react well to death... even if it's the death of their iPod.

And people don't react well to their own death's either. A comic once said: “I am not afraid to die. It's just that I can't get up much enthusiasm for it.” But despite that humor, most people do fear death.

Years ago, song writer Randy Newman was being interviewed by a magazine back in the 70s and responded to one question by saying: "I think religion is a tremendously powerful force. How else is someone going to face the horror of everything ending?" Knowing Newman to be an atheist, the reporter shot back: "So how do you face it?" Newman replied: "I don't. I joke around..." People struggle with the fear of death because it is a reality in this world that most people are uncomfortable with death. They're afraid of death.

And that's what the Bible teaches us in Hebrews 2:15 – it says the major reason Jesus took on the form of a man and died on the cross, was to "deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." Jesus came to free us from that fear of death.

That's why, throughout the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly said things like:

"I am the way and the truth and the life..." John 14:6

"... Because I live, you also will live." John 14:19

"...I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies" John 11:25.

Jesus freed us from the fear of death by dying on the cross AND THEN by personally overcoming that death by His resurrection. When Jesus rose from the dead, He broke the bonds of death. As I Corinthians 15 says it; "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Corinthians 15:54-57

Jesus came to give us life, and life more abundantly than any other power can give. But there is still that ticklish problem: Just like the batteries in our electronic devices, we still age and decay... and eventually die. How can this mortal body become immortal? How can that which is perishable become imperishable? Well, what we need is a different battery... a different life-source.

And that's what Romans 6 is all about. **Read Romans 6:3-8...**

You see: when we were baptized into Christ something changed within us. Our old self was crucified with Him...the body of sin is brought to nothing...we are no longer enslaved to sin.

In Christ, God took out the old life-source. He removed the sin that had powered our lives up to that point. It was like removing an old battery that was going to decay and die. And then He replaced it with a new battery... a new life source.

Notice I said God replaced it. There are those who still believe that life and salvation are based on human action and good works. Sometimes some will even say at the funeral of someone who was not a Christian, they certainly will be in heaven because they are such nice people and did so many good things for others. But, Paul reminds us in Ephesians 2: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

We can illustrate it this way: When you go to a funeral, you'll see the casket up front, and the pulpit for the preacher... and you'll see something else? What? That's right...flowers. They're all beautiful, and they're all special gifts from people who wanted to show their love for the departed. They're all beautiful... but there's a basic difference between them.

- Some are cut flowers, arranged in a attractive bouquet.
- Others are potted plants.

About a week or so after the funeral, the cut flowers will begin to wither and die. But for weeks, maybe years after the funeral – the potted plants will still be alive. What's the difference? (The potted plants have roots). Both flower arrangements have a beautiful fruit... but only the potted plants have roots. The roots are the source of life to the plant. It's the root – not the fruit - that determines if the plant will live. So also, it's the root – not the fruit - that determines if we will live forever with Christ. When God gave you a new heart –He gave you a power source that will allow you to live forever.

One last thought. There are those in this world who refuse to become Christians because they're afraid of what they'll have to give up. And they're right. When you come to Christ, you surrender the past. You surrender your life to God because you realize you can't do it on your own.

Christian singing group Phillips, Craig and Dean say it this way in their song "Crucified with Christ":

"When I look back at what I thought was living
I'm amazed at the price I chose to pay
And to think I ignored what really mattered
'Cause I thought the sacrifice would be too great
But when I finally reached the point of giving in
I found the cross was calling even then
And even though it took dying to survive
I've never felt so much alive

CHORUS: For I am crucified with Christ and yet I live
Not I but Christ that lives within me
His cross will never ask for more than I can give
For it's not my strength but His
There's no greater sacrifice
For I am crucified with Christ and yet I live

REPRISE And I will offer all I have so that His cross is not in vain
For I've found to live - is Christ ... and to die is truly gain.

Paul wrote: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." I live, small "I", because of Christ, in Christ, and for Christ. Amen.