

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

A 5-Day Reflection Guide

Joy



SERMON SERIES:
ALIVE

WEEK & TOPIC:
ALIVE

DATES:
OCTOBER 12–16, 2026

This Week's Big Idea

This week's devotional is drawn from our **ALIVE** series, originally shared during the Easter season. But resurrection isn't an Easter message—it's a Christian life message. The empty tomb isn't simply something we celebrate once a year; it changes how we live every day. This week, we're going back to those truths and asking a simple question: **If Jesus is alive, what does that mean for the way I live today?**

ALIVE

Day 1: What Are You Holding Onto?



TODAYS SCRIPTURE

John 12:24–25 (NLT) “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.”

TODAY'S SEED

There's something uncomfortable about planting a seed. You take something you possess, something with value and potential, and put it somewhere you can no longer see it. Then you cover it with dirt. If you didn't understand how seeds work, planting would look a lot like losing.

That's the picture Jesus chose when He talked about what was about to happen to Him.

Palm Sunday looked like victory. Crowds were cheering. Palm branches were waving. People were shouting, “Hosanna!” They wanted Jesus to save them **now**. Remove the Roman oppression, and change their circumstances.

But while the crowd was celebrating what they thought Jesus was going to do, Jesus was surrendering to what He actually came to do. He said, “Unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone.” Jesus knew the cross would look like loss. But He also knew something the crowd couldn't see. There was a harvest inside the seed. And then Jesus turns the principle toward us.

Sometimes the things we try hardest to hold onto are the very things God asks us to plant. Control, pride, fear, hurt, disappointment. Maybe it's the need to be right, or feel understood. We hold tightly to these because surrender feels like losing. But a seed held tightly in your hand can never become what it was created to become. Some things can only multiply after we release them.

Maybe you've been asking God to change something around you, while God has been asking you to surrender something within you. We often want Jesus to remove the pressure without touching our pride. Remove the pain without requiring surrender. Bless our plans without interrupting them. But Jesus came to do something deeper than improve our circumstances. He came to make us alive. So perhaps the question today isn't simply, “God, what are You going to do for me?” Maybe it's: “God, what am I still holding that You're asking me to plant?”

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Greek word translated “**dies**” in John 12:24 is **apothnēskō** –to die or cease living. Jesus chose strong language intentionally. A seed doesn't merely get relocated; something about its previous form must give way so the life inside it can emerge. That's the paradox of surrender: **what looks like an ending can become the beginning of multiplication.**

DON'T MISS THIS

The things we try hardest to hold onto are often the very things God asks us to plant.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. What are you currently asking God to change around you?
2. Could God be asking you to surrender something within you first?
3. What are you holding tightly—control, hurt, pride, fear, disappointment, comfort, the need to be right or understood?
4. What might become possible if you finally put that seed into God's hands?

WATER THE SEED

Name one thing you've been holding tightly. Write it down, then intentionally give it to God in prayer today. You don't have to know what will grow from your surrender. **The seed doesn't need to understand the harvest—it simply needs to be planted.**

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Show me what I'm still holding onto. I confess that sometimes I want You to change my circumstances without changing me. I want relief without surrender and breakthrough without letting go. But Jesus showed me another way. Give me the courage to place into Your hands whatever I've been trying to protect—my control, my pride, my hurt, my plans, my timeline, my fear or my need to understand everything. What I surrender to You is never wasted. When letting go feels like loss, remind me that seeds were created to be planted. I trust You with what I cannot see. Take what I surrender today and use it to produce something greater than I could have produced by holding onto it.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

RESURRECTION ISN'T JUST SOMETHING WE CELEBRATE. IT'S A REALITY WE STEP INTO. THE SAME SPIRIT. THE SAME POWER. THE SAME LIFE. JESUS IS ALIVE—AND BECAUSE HE LIVES, WE CAN LIVE ALIVE.

LOOKING AHEAD

Day Two – Buried or Planted?

Friday looked final. Jesus was dead. His body was placed in a tomb and a stone was rolled across the entrance. But what everyone thought had been **buried**, God had actually **planted**. Tomorrow we'll discover why resurrection changes the way we interpret the places in our lives that look finished.



ALIVE

Day 2: Buried or Planted?



TODAYS SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 15:20–22 (NIV) “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”

John 12:24 (NKJV) “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

TODAY'S SEED

There's a huge difference between burying something and planting something. From above the ground, they can look exactly the same. Something becomes covered and disappears into the dirt. You can't see it anymore. Nothing appears to be happening. Buried says it's over, but planting says, something's coming.

On Friday, Jesus looked buried. He had been arrested, beaten and crucified. His body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in grave clothes and placed inside a borrowed tomb.

A stone was rolled across the entrance. To the disciples, it looked final. They weren't waiting outside the tomb counting down to Sunday morning. They were grieving. Hiding. Afraid. They thought it was over.

But Jesus had already told them how to interpret what was happening. A seed was going into the ground. What looked

like burial was actually planting. And Easter morning forever changed the meaning of buried. Because buried things are finished.

Planted things have a future. Resurrection isn't pretending painful things aren't painful. It means we can surrender even those places to a God who knows how to bring life out of death.

Your surrendered pain may feel buried—but God can turn it into testimony. Your obedience may feel hidden underground—but eternity may reveal a harvest you cannot see today.

Surrender can feel like loss, but we can surrender, because resurrection means God gets the final word.

Friday wasn't the final chapter, and the cross wasn't the end. And perhaps you may discover that what feels buried today wasn't buried after all, it was planted!

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Paul calls Jesus the “firstfruits” in 1 Corinthians 15:20. The Greek word *aparchē* refers to the first portion of a harvest—the beginning that points toward more to come. Jesus' resurrection wasn't an isolated event. It was the beginning of the harvest. The firstfruits were proof that death had not won and that more life was coming.

DON'T MISS THIS

Buried things are finished. Planted things have a future.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. Is there an area of your life you've already labeled "finished"?
2. What makes that situation feel buried rather than planted?
3. How would your perspective change if you believed God could still bring something redemptive from it?
4. What pain, disappointment, repentance or hidden obedience do you need to place into God's hands today?

WATER THE SEED

Think of one situation in your life that feels buried. Instead of asking only, "Why did this happen?" begin asking, "God, what could You grow from this?" You don't have to manufacture an answer. Simply surrender the situation and give God permission to reinterpret what you have called finished.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You that Friday was not the final chapter. When something in my life feels buried, help me remember the empty tomb. Teach me not to call finished what You may still be working in. I surrender my disappointments, my pain, my broken places and the things I cannot understand. Turn pain into compassion. Turn broken seasons into testimony. Turn repentance into freedom. And when my obedience seems hidden and nothing appears to be happening, give me faith to trust what You are doing beneath the surface. Because Jesus is alive, death does not have the final word. What I surrender to You is never wasted. Help me trust that planted things have a future.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Day Three – The Same Spirit Lives in You

It's possible to believe Jesus rose from the dead and still think of resurrection as something that happened a long time ago. But Paul makes an astounding statement: "The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you." Tomorrow we'll move from the empty tomb to what resurrection means on an ordinary Tuesday—the same Spirit, the same power, the same life.



ALIVE

Day 3: The Same Spirit Lives in You



TODAYS SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:11 (NLT) “The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you.”

TODAY'S SEED

We believe Jesus died. We believe the tomb is empty. We believe He rose from the dead, but do you realize it's possible to believe in the resurrection and still live like nothing really changed? If we're not careful, resurrection becomes something that happened **to Jesus** a long time ago instead of a reality that changes how we live today.

Paul makes this statement in Romans 8:11: **“The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you.”**

Think about that. The same Spirit that brought life out of death. The same Spirit that turned what looked like defeat into victory. The same Spirit that stepped into a sealed tomb and reversed death itself. Lives in you. Not a lesser version, not a watered-down version, not a junior Holy Spirit. The same Spirit. The same power. The same life. That means resurrection is not simply something we celebrate—it's a reality we step into.

Sometimes we live as though we're waiting for God to give us something He has already placed within us. It's like downloading an app onto your phone and never using it.

Everything the app is capable of doing may already be there, but having it installed and living from what it can do are two different things. You can have a Bible app and never open it, or a fitness app and never exercise.

The issue isn't, **“Do I have it?”** the issue is, **“Am I living from what I already have?”** When you received Christ, God didn't simply forgive your past. He gave you new life, His Spirit lives in you. So maybe instead of asking God for more power, maybe you need to become more aware of the One who already lives in you. You are not facing today alone. You are not depending solely on your strength. The Spirit of the living God is present in you.

The same Spirit, the same power, the same life is in you now. Thankfully Jesus is alive, but don't forget that because He is alive, you can live ... **ALIVE!**

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Greek word translated **“Spirit”** in Romans 8:11 is **pneuma** —a word associated with **spirit, breath and wind**. Paul isn't describing an idea or merely a religious influence. He says the Spirit of God **dwells** in us. Resurrection life isn't something we admire from a distance. **God has placed His life-giving presence within us.**

DON'T MISS THIS

The same Spirit. The same power. The same life.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. Do you tend to think of the resurrection primarily as something that happened to Jesus, or as something that changes how you live today?
2. Where have you been depending mostly on your own strength?
3. Is there an area where you've been asking God for something He has already made available through His Spirit?
4. What would look different today if you became more conscious that the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you?

WATER THE SEED

Pause several times today and remind yourself: **“The Spirit of God lives in me.”** Before the meeting, before the conversation, when pressure rises or when you feel inadequate, stop depending only on yourself. Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom, strength and help, then step forward believing you are not facing the moment alone.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You that the resurrection is more than an event I celebrate. Thank You that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in me. Forgive me for the times I've lived as though everything depends on my own strength. Make me more aware of Your presence and more dependent on Your Spirit. Teach me to live from what You have already placed within me. When I feel weak, remind me that Your Spirit is present. When I feel stuck, remind me that resurrection power specializes in places that look finished. When I'm tempted to retreat, help me step forward in faith. The same Spirit. The same power. The same life. Jesus is alive—and because He lives, help me live ALIVE.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Day Four – Stop Living Like the Old You

You can be saved but stuck. Forgiven but fearful. Free but still thinking like a prisoner. Why? Because belief drives behavior. Tomorrow we'll discover why resurrection doesn't simply change our future—it gives us a new identity and changes the person we believe ourselves to be.



ALIVE

Day 4: Stop Living Like the Old You



TODAYS SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT) “This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

Ephesians 2:4–6 (NLT) “But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.”

TODAY’S SEED

You have probably heard me say at one time or another, “you will always act like the person you believe yourself to be”. If you believe, “I’m a failure,” you’ll eventually sabotage success. If you believe, “Nobody really wants me,” you may push people away before they get close enough to reject you. If you believe, “I’m powerless,” you probably won’t step forward when an opportunity comes. If you believe, “I’m stuck,” you’ll stop looking for a way forward.

Belief drives behavior. You don’t simply act like the person you **wish** you were, eventually, you act like the person you’ve decided you are. And that creates a problem for believers. Because it’s possible to receive a new life while continuing to live from an old identity. Your saved—but stuck, forgiven—but fearful, free—but still thinking like a prisoner.

Yesterday we saw that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in us. But resurrection goes even further. Paul says when you belong to Christ, “the old life is gone; a new life has begun!” God didn’t repair the old you, He made you brand new.

A seed doesn’t go into the ground and come back out as a nicer-looking seed. Something completely different emerges. That’s resurrection. Too many of us have spent years asking God to help us become a better version of the person we used to be. But resurrection isn’t self-improvement. It’s new life.

So perhaps the question isn’t, “**What do I need to fix about myself?**” Maybe the better question is, “Who does God say I am now?” You are forgiven, loved, united with Christ, you have been made alive and His Spirit lives in you.

Your past may explain some things about you, but it no longer has the authority to define you.

Stop introducing yourself to your future using the language of your past. You don’t have to keep living like the person you were, because a new life has begun.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Greek word translated “new” in 2 Corinthians 5:17 is *kainos* (κ κ κ κ κ κ κ). It describes something **new in nature or quality** –not simply repaired, refreshed or improved. Paul’s picture isn’t that Jesus makes the old person a little better. In Christ there is new creation. Resurrection isn’t God renovating your old identity; it gives you a new one.

DON’T MISS THIS

You will always act like the person you believe yourself to be.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. What words do you most often use internally to describe yourself?
2. Where are you saved, forgiven and free—but still behaving as though nothing has changed?
3. What would change in your behavior if you truly believed, “The old life is gone; a new life has begun”?

WATER THE SEED

Listen closely to the way you describe yourself today—especially the sentences that begin, “I’m just...” “I’ve always been...” or “I could never...” When you recognize old-identity language, stop and replace it with something God says about you. Start with this: “I belong to Christ. The old life is gone. A new life has begun.”

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You that You didn’t simply forgive my old life—you gave me a new one. Show me where I am still thinking and living from an identity that no longer belongs to me. Expose the old labels I’ve accepted and the lies I’ve repeated for so long that they feel like truth. Teach me to see myself through what You have done in Christ. I am not defined by my worst moment, my greatest failure, my fear or my past. I belong to Jesus. I have been forgiven. I have been made alive. Your Spirit lives in me. Help my thinking catch up with what Your grace has already accomplished. Let what I believe about who I am begin changing the way I live. The old life is gone. Help me live ALIVE.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Day Five – Live From Freedom

There’s a difference between trying to get free and learning to live as someone who has been set free. The cross broke the chains; the Spirit teaches us how to walk out of the prison. Tomorrow we’ll finish the week by making that distinction personal: You’re not fighting FOR freedom—you’re learning to live FROM it.



ALIVE

Day 5: Live From Freedom



TODAYS SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:2 (NLT) “And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.”

2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT) “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”

TODAY'S SEED

Imagine a prison door swinging open—but the prisoner stays inside. The lock is gone, the door is open and freedom is available. But after years of living inside the cell, prison has become familiar. The person has been set free but hasn't learned how to live free. That can happen spiritually. Jesus breaks the chains, but we keep thinking like prisoners.

Yesterday we saw that resurrection gives us a new identity. The old life is gone and a new life has begun. But now we have to learn to live like the person we have become. Paul says, “the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.” Notice the language. He **HAS** freed you. There are some things you don't need to keep asking God to accomplish as though Jesus left something unfinished.

The cross dealt with sin. The resurrection defeated death. The Spirit now lives in you. That doesn't mean temptation disappears or that spiritual growth becomes automatic. It means you're no longer fighting from the same position. You're not a prisoner trying to earn freedom, you're a free

person learning how to walk free. That's a completely different way to live. Fear says, **Stay in the cell, s**hame says, **This is who you've always been, y**our past says, **You'll never change.**

But resurrection says, “That thing you thought had the final word...doesn't.” Fear doesn't have the final word, your past doesn't have the final word, sin doesn't have the final word, and neither does the tomb. Jesus does!

This week began with a seed being surrendered. Then we discovered that what looked buried was actually planted. We learned that the same Spirit who raised Jesus lives in us. We discovered that resurrection gives us a new identity. Now there is only one thing left to do, walk out of the tomb. Don't stand in the doorway staring back at what Jesus brought you out of. Live from what Christ has already accomplished. You're not fighting **FOR** freedom, you're learning to live **FROM** it.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The word translated “freed” in Romans 8:2 comes from the Greek *eleutheroō*—**to set free, liberate or release from bondage**. Notice that Paul speaks of freedom as something accomplished: the life-giving Spirit has freed you. Christian freedom begins not with what we are trying to achieve, but with what Christ has already accomplished. We don't obey in order to become free; we learn obedience because in Christ we have been set free.

DON'T MISS THIS

You're not fighting FOR freedom—you're learning to live FROM it.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. Is there an area where Jesus has opened the prison door, but you keep returning to the familiar cell?
2. Where are fear, shame or your past still speaking louder than your new identity?
3. What is one practical step a person who believes they are truly free would take today?

WATER THE SEED

Take one freedom step today. Do something consistent with the person Christ says you are rather than the person you used to be. It might mean forgiving, asking for help, resisting an old habit, having a difficult conversation, praying boldly or simply refusing to repeat an old lie about yourself. Don't wait until you feel free to live free. Take a step from the freedom Christ has already given you.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You for making me alive in Christ. Thank You that Jesus finished what I could never accomplish for myself. Sin does not own me. Fear does not define me. Shame does not get the final word. My past does not determine my future. Your life-giving Spirit has set me free. Now teach me to live from that freedom. When old thinking calls me back, remind me who I am. When fear tells me to stay in the cell, give me courage to walk through the open door. Help me live from resurrection instead of merely celebrating it. The old life is gone. A new life has begun. Jesus is alive. Your Spirit lives in me. And because He lives, I choose to live ALIVE.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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This Week: Alive

We began with surrender. A seed held safely in your hand remains alone. But when it is planted, what looks like loss can become the beginning of multiplication. Then came resurrection. What looked buried wasn't finished. God was working beneath the surface. Planted things have a future. But we didn't stop at the empty tomb. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in us. That means resurrection changes our identity. We don't have to keep living like the old person when God has made us new. And resurrection changes how we walk into tomorrow. We live from freedom.

So, don't leave resurrection in April, carry it into Monday morning, your marriage, your workplace. You can carry it into your struggles, and carry it into the places that still feel buried, or where fear tells you nothing will ever change. Because resurrection isn't merely an event we remember. Jesus is alive, and because He lives—**LIVE ALIVE.**

