1. Psalm 110 was a favorite Psalm of New Testament believers when they thought of Jesus, sang, or taught about Him. When you think of Jesus, what is your favorite Scripture, Psalm, or song? Take a few minutes and share with the group what it is and what it means to you.

2. We can all admit that there are times when we feel the world is out of control. Ben pointed to several examples in his sermon. Read Matthew 8:23-27. What assurance and peace comes from Jesus as Lord of your life?

3. Read Hebrews 8. In this chapter, the writer announces God’s “new deal” – a covenant, or agreement, between God and humanity. It offers a superior promise to that of the Old Testament laws and regulations.
   a. “We do have such a high priest” refers to the description of Jesus in 7:23-28. What additional facts do you learn about him (vv. 1-2)?
   b. What is Christ’s heavenly ministry (vv. 3-6)?
   c. Verse 6 looks back to prove Christ’s superior ministry and ahead to prove that we have a superior covenant with God. The key is “better promises.” What was the problem with the first covenant (vv. 7-12)?
   d. What guarantees God’s “new deal” (v. 12)? (See also vv. 1-3; 9:14)

4. Read Matthew 28:1-10. “When the stoned rolled away, it was like the prison door swinging open.”
   a. When was your open door moment? When did you first come to realize your need for a savior and allow Jesus to open the door to the prison for you?
   b. Is there an area where you struggle in accepting forgiveness and walking in complete forgiveness?
   c. How can your community pray for you to accept completely the unmerited grace and mercy offered by the stone rolling away?

Challenge: As a group, offer up names of those that you know need the door to open in their lives. Spend some time praying for them to come to know Jesus and the miracle of resurrected life.
Prayer: O Risen Lord, be our resurrection and life.

Be the resurrection and the life for us and all whom you have made.

Be the resurrection and the life for those caught in the grip of sin and addiction.

Be the resurrection and the life for those who feel forsaken.

Be the resurrection and the life for those who live as if you do not.

Be the resurrection and the life for those who do not believe they need resurrection and life.

Be the resurrection and the life in churches that believe they are dying, and in successful churches who don’t know they are dead.

Be the resurrection and the life in us who know the good but fail to do it, who have not been judged but still judge, who know love but still live for self, who know hope but succumb to despair.

Be the resurrection and the life for those dying of malnutrition and hunger.

Be the resurrection and life for those imprisoned unjustly and those imprisoned justly.

Be the resurrection and life for those who live under regimes that seek to crush all who proclaim resurrection and life.

Be the resurrection and the life for those in the throes of sickness that leads to death.

Be the resurrection and the life in families where the weak are maltreated by the strong.

Be the resurrection and the life in marriages that are disintegrating.

Be the resurrection and the life for women trafficked and enslaved by the forces of wickedness.

Be the resurrection and the life for those whose lives are snuffed out in the womb.

Be the resurrection and the life for anyone anywhere who knows suffering and death in any form, and for Creation itself, which groans in travail.

Be the resurrection and life in the life we share and the fellowship we enjoy, that filled anew with the wonder of your love and the power of your grace, we may go forth to proclaim your resurrection life to a world in the grip of death and yet on the verge of redemption,
a redemption promised by you and assured by what occurred on the first Easter morn.

Amen.

https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/trevinwax/2011/05/15/an-easter-prayer/
Calvary Conquers the Fear of Death

Sinners run backward toward an open grave, said Martin Luther, unable to face death but inevitably moving straight at it, trying to put it out of sight and out of mind with any diversion, and yet shuffling in reverse until the inevitable meeting occurs. Then the sudden tumble down.

And yet here we are on Good Friday, strange as we are as Christians, for the culturally bizarre practice of looking death straight in the face and even celebrating torturous bloodshed.

It is here, in death, that we not only meet the sacrifice of Christ, but here we unmask Satan’s power play over the world.

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (Hebrews 2:14–15)

Satan does not wield the sword of death at will. The wreckage of his hands is always limited by God (see Job 1:12). No, the power Satan wields more freely is the fear of death. Satan is a slave-master who wields words and lies and threats of death to tyrannize and manipulate his subjects. His power is wielded most freely, not in the sword, but in the manipulative reminders he whispers in our ears.

Satan speaks in our ears the lies of an anti-Psalm 23: “As you walk through the pitch darkness of the valley of death, you live in dread of evil, for you are alone and unguided and uncomfor ted.”

But is this true?

Is This Friday Good?

How many of us think of death in a given day?

The reality is that very rarely do we think about death. We shuffle backwards to avoid the subject altogether.

Yet the fear of death is no less our slavery — lifelong slavery, a slavery that drives everything about our lives, including our addictions.

How many of our obsessions are attempts to repress the fear of death? “The point is not that people are enslaved to a constant, conscious fear of dying,” says John Piper, “but that they are enslaved to a thousand ways of avoiding this fear. They are enslaved to ‘the denial of death.’ ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’ (1 Corinthians 15:32) is not an exultation of true freedom, but another form of benumbing denial. Death looms as the great enemy. And we become its slaves in the illusory flight of denial” (Future Grace, 354).
In our denial of death, Satan steers our lives to consume a life of vain distractions and amusements to mute our mortality. It does not settle the issues; it pushes on us unsettling anxieties and worries about our future, and it leaves our deepest insecurities unalleviated.

In other words, at its root, the fear of death drives our Netflix bingeing.

It also suffocates our love. The fear of death enslaves our lives, and it makes us timid and dull — boring and bigheaded, and consumed with our own self-preservation, writes Piper. With the fear of death whispered in our ears, we turn up the volume to our diversions, and as we do, we find ourselves unable to give our lives away (Fifty Reasons, 97).

These are two of the ways the fear of death becomes Satan’s greatest weapon, his greatest power, his greatest mind-trick to control our choices. No part of our lives escapes the reach of the fear of death.

To put it as boldly as possible, “Death is — apart from God — the greatest moral power in this world, outlasting and subduing all other powers no matter how marvelous they may seem for the time being,” claims one ethicist. “This means, theologically speaking, that the object of allegiance and servitude, the real idol secreted within all idolatries, the power above all principalities and powers — the idol of all idols — is death” (Ethics for Christians, 81).

We see this in the flow of Hebrews 2:14–18 — our threefold slavery to Satan, sin, and death all laboring together, but death is the consuming power behind it all, a fear wielded by Satan, driving us and animating our pursuits of sinful pleasure as we shuffle backwards toward the grave trying to drown out our undefeatable foe, death, by a million diversions in the opposite direction.

Until now.

One Good Man

Today we stop and celebrate the one man who shared our flesh and blood, but did not share our tyranny under the reign of death. And since he had no fear of death, he was not distracted by vain amusements, and he was not driven by self-preservation. Death was his sworn enemy, not his inevitability.

There was stress, to be sure — bright red tears pressed out by the weight of his task — but death could not deter him. Death could not manipulate him. He would not shuffle backwards, he would square up on death for us.

Good Friday is a strange and wonderful day as we celebrate the one thing our culture tries so desperately to suppress. And yet it is our prime opportunity to see his love on display in the agony of the cross, and by it to see that Satan’s great power play over humanity has been broken.

Today we celebrate death, not as a morbid preoccupation, but as proof that we have been freed from the fear of death, freed from the lifelong slavery of the world.

http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/calvary-conquers-the-fear-of-death