

Rise Up: Finding Hope, Purpose, and Freedom in Christ

Theme Scripture

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses..."

— Acts 1:8

Supporting Scripture

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles..."

— Isaiah 40:31

S — Scripture

Read the following passages:

Primary Passage

Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses..."

Additional Passages

- Isaiah 40:31
 - Hebrews 13:5
 - Romans 8:28
 - John 8:36
 - Proverbs 3:5-6
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O — Observation

This testimony-centered discussion reveals several powerful truths about God's work in people's lives.

Jason shared how God transformed his life from addiction, incarceration, and hopelessness into a life of purpose and ministry. The conversation repeatedly emphasized that God is not transactional—He is relational. God doesn't simply dispense blessings when we ask; He invites us into a relationship with Him and His family.

The prison outreach illustrated a profound spiritual reality: many men behind bars were discovering a freedom in Christ that some people outside prison never experience. Though physically confined, they were finding spiritual liberty through faith and discipleship.

The "Rise Up" trick shot became a picture of the Gospel. Just as the cue ball stands back up after appearing defeated, God gives us the strength to rise again after failure, grief, addiction, loss, or discouragement.

Key Observations

- God can redeem any past.
 - God uses our testimony to encourage others.
 - True freedom comes through Christ, not circumstances.
 - The Holy Spirit empowers believers to be witnesses.
 - Hope can flourish even in dark places.
 - God's strength enables us to rise again after setbacks.
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A — Application

1. What Prison Am I Living In?

Not all prisons have bars.

Some people are imprisoned by:

- Fear
- Addiction
- Shame
- Bitterness
- Grief
- Anxiety
- Unforgiveness

Reflection

What is currently holding you captive?

Action Step

Bring that struggle honestly before God this week and ask Him for freedom.

2. Filling the God-Shaped Hole

Jason described spending years trying to fill an emptiness with other things before discovering that only God could satisfy it.

Reflection

What have you been relying on for happiness or significance?

- Success?
 - Money?
 - Relationships?
 - Recognition?
 - Entertainment?
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Action Step

Identify one area where you've been seeking fulfillment apart from God and surrender it to Him.

3. Rise Up Again

Everyone experiences setbacks.

- Loss
- Failure
- Disappointment
- Broken dreams
- Spiritual struggles

Yet God specializes in helping people rise again.

Reflection

Where do you need God's strength to rise up?

Action Step

Take one step this week that demonstrates faith rather than fear.

Pool Table Principle

The "Rise Up Shot" illustrates the Christian life.

At first, the cue ball appears down and defeated.

Then, through the right contact and motion, it stands upright and continues spinning.

In the same way:

- Christ lifts us when we're down.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us.
- God's grace gives us another chance.

Truth

Your fall does not define you. God's ability to raise you does.

Discussion Questions

1. What part of Jason's testimony resonates most with you?
 2. Why do you think some prisoners described feeling more freedom inside than people experience outside?
 3. What does it mean that God is relational rather than transactional?
 4. How has God used difficult experiences in your life for good?
 5. What area of your life needs a "Rise Up" moment today?
 6. How can your testimony encourage someone else?
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P — Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for being a God of second chances. Thank You that no prison, addiction, failure, or hardship is greater than Your power.

Help me stop trying to fill my life with things that cannot satisfy. Draw me closer into a relationship with You.

Where I am discouraged, help me rise up.

Where I am afraid, give me courage.

Where I am weak, give me strength.

Where I feel trapped, bring freedom.

Use my story, my struggles, and my victories to point others to Jesus.

Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and help me be a witness wherever You place me.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Weekly Challenge

Each morning pray:

"Lord, help me rise up today through Your strength, not my own."

Then ask yourself:

Who needs to hear my testimony this week?

Write one person's name below and pray for an opportunity to encourage them:

Memory Verse

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles..." — Isaiah 40:31

Bottom Line:

No matter how far you've fallen, God's grace can help you rise again