

Dead to Sin!

Rom. 6:1-11

In Paul's sister letter to the Galatians, the Apostle of Grace declares: "I am crucified with Christ – nevertheless I live. And the life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

The message of the gospel is that Jesus died FOR sinners like us.

But the same gospel declares just as clearly that we died IN Christ!

That is the central concern of Paul now in Romans 6, when asking about why, since Christians have all sins forgiven, that they don't continue to sin.

It is a striking thing. Why not sin? He does not go immediately to how bad sin is or how to fight sin practically, or how we can now put sin to death.

No – rather the Christian cannot continue to sin because of his crucifixion and resurrection in Jesus!

Let that sink in for a moment.

Your struggles with your sins – whatever they are – how many they are – how difficult they are – is first and foremost answered with: Jesus! Is that your answer, first and forever?

The Spirit's answer is not do something but that something is already done to you. It is not look within but look without, to Him.

We will come to our struggle, our warfare. But before coming to your new service, our Master Jesus has already rescued and released us from the power of sin unto death!

No less than 17 times is Jesus referred to in these 9 verses.

And it is the title Christ or Messiah especially that rings out. This is what the Savior is all about, what He came to do. To die for sinners, and raise them up with Himself as He rose bodily from the grave.

Gospel baptism, Gospel hope, Gospel freedom, Gospel faith, Gospel identity all flow from the cross; and the life He now lives, as the resurrected God/Man, He shares with all of His redeemed.

When Paul is asked, can Christians continue in sin as before, he sees Jesus stepping forward, with his nail prints and empty tomb, and says, “NO WAY!”

Through Jesus, the believer cannot continue to live in sin because the believer has died to sin; to sin as a king, a master, a prison.

We could put it in this related and biblical way: the believer cannot continue to live in death because he or she has been made alive through Christ! A new king of grace, a new master, and a new freedom is yours!

Here is the wonderful doctrine: union with Christ means union with his death and resurrection, which means your once-for-all death to sin and a new, risen life, bundled with Jesus!

The next time we will come to the Alive to God part; but today, we have to go to the morgue, to the cemetery, and listen to the Coroner pronounce each of you believers as dead! Dead to Sin!

We come first to a picture of your death in your baptism, in verses 3-4.

Then the spiritual union to Jesus seen in baptism is brought to the front in verse 5 – you must rise with him if you have died with him.

Then in 6-7, three things about your spiritual funeral: here is no pulse as your old man has been crucified; second, your body of sin has

grown cold and stiff; third, you have ceased breathing for the slavish things of sin.

The summary then in 7 is that you are freed from your bondage, leaving that old man, old life, old flesh and old service behind!

But all of these flow from Jesus, the head, in 8-11.

As Christ has been raised from the dead never to die again; and death no longer has mastery over him; He, having once died to sin, once for all – and is done with death; so you are to consider yourselves, as alive from the dead, and alive from sin!

And since this is the head and source of it all, we want to make this our first point, in 8-11.

Your Jesus has died, not only **for** your sins in justification, but has died **under** the power and dominion of sin, to forever bury it!

He like mighty Samson bringing down the pillars of sin and death upon himself. So doing, he has brought down the power of sin and death against you as well.

He who died in weakness proved stronger than death! By death he has killed death with its own sword!

Jesus is the death of death! And He is the life of life! Is his name not “the Resurrection and the Life”? Does he not own keys which are called hell and death?

So see here that this is not something he has made available to the Christian. This is not some option which only some believers put into practice.

No – you are sharers in all He has accomplished. Your inheritance, your cup, is overflowing! And sin and death are no longer your master!

Put it this way – sin and death are still part of your life, but they are so in a diminished and beaten way. You no longer dwell at this address of King Sin and the House of Death.

Jesus came to your old address, while you were enemies, and by His marvelous cross and resurrection, translated you to His kingdom of eternal life.

See yourself – *identify* yourself – as those who are dead to sin and alive to the Father in Christ Jesus! This is the gift of God in salvation in the giving His Son to you!

Now the Spirit has been driving to this point from verse 3-7 – baptism illustrates this; a vital, spiritual union with this once dead, now living Lord is in verse 5; and the fruit of this union with Jesus is in 6-7 – that is, you have died and you are free! Free from sin's dominion.

Let's begin then by wading into the troubled waters of baptism!.

Baptism here signifies and seals to us union with Jesus and with all Jesus did for us.

Notice several facts here:

1. All believers are assumed to be baptized; baptism is a part of the Christian life.
2. Baptism doesn't save us, of course, but it still serves as a sign and seal of salvation – of washing from sins, of regeneration, of discipleship under God. Not everyone who is baptized is necessarily saved.
3. Baptism is very much about union. The word itself classically meant to merge, to join with and so become one. Paul goes right from these verses on baptism to speak of being united to Christ in verse 5. See how the two are parallel with one another.
4. Baptism has to do first with Christ Himself, and with Him, his death and resurrection. Our Baptist friends wish to see immersion here, of

being buried in a grave. But notice that it is first union with Jesus himself before his death and resurrection. A better and clearer parallel is to be found between John's baptism by water and Christ's baptism by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came on the church not as a big tub of water, but poured out upon all his people.

So Paul is saying that our baptism – which parallels and replaces circumcision – is pointing to this great change. We are no longer in Adam but in the Lord Jesus Christ. And being in Him, we have been brought into his death and his life. Christian baptism is not just about newness of life; it is also about putting away death – baptism into death, says the Spirit. Verse 5 carries this through that you died with him, through him, by him, when you were converted, when you came to him for salvation, for forgiveness, for life.

Baptism is the outward sign and seal of this glorious change of kingdoms.

Let us come then past baptism to the spiritual connection with Christ in verse 5.

Baptism illustrates union with Christ and His cross and ascension; to be united to Him has to include both of these elements – death and resurrection.

There is no partial fellowship with these things in Christ. If we have become one with him in the likeness of his death, then the idea that we wouldn't partake in the fullness of his resurrection life is impossible. To be taken out of the kingdom of darkness, sin and death means to be ushered into the kingdom of light, grace and eternal life.

But how is this brought about? By union with Jesus Christ.

Looking over at 1 Cor. 12:12-13, we see the spiritual nature of this union with Christ. Paul is getting right to what is signified in baptism; in fact there are those who see no water whatsoever here; as this

speaks of the mystical body of Christ, there is a mystical baptism of the Spirit who engrafts the believer into Christ, and Christ into the believer.

There is no real death to sin or life to God without Jesus and without this vital implanting into Him. We may agree even that Jesus is the Savior. But apart from a true, spiritual oneness with him by the mighty Holy Spirit, by faith, we have nothing of it! We will perish on the very shore of an ocean of eternal life!

We come to our last point in 6-7, regarding the benefits or fruit of this union in every Christian's life.

Please, please, please see – these are facts to be known and believed, and not duties to be carried out or accomplished! These are yours in Christ right now! What are they?

First of all, know that your old person in Adam, in the flesh, who you were as a sinner apart from God, is no more!

You are not that old creature any longer but a new creature in Christ Jesus!

This crucifixion is past tense; it is over with. It is not a command to crucify your sins or anything like that. This is a once-for-all decisive doing away with the old fallen depraved person you were outside of Christ.

If the old sinful nature is still alive, then how could Paul say that we cannot continue in sin?

This great change in you is entirely through the Lord Jesus and his death on the cross. It is not your death or painful laying down of your life. It is all of Christ, and He gives the fruit of His cross.

As we will see more fully later in Romans, you are no longer what you once were. You have a new identity now. The old has been put to

death! Men do not return from their crucifixion; that is a one-way street.

Secondly, the doing away of the old person includes the doing away once and for all of this puzzling phrase, the “in order that our body of sin might be done away with.” What does this mean?

Some taken this figuratively as the whole system of sinfulness you once were in has been done away, made powerless.

But it seems better to take it in its literal sense, the body acting as the instrument of sin. This ties in well with presenting the members of our body to sin in verse 13. Quote.

“Here Paul uses a verb, ‘brought to nothing,’ that expresses the idea of rendering something inoperable or barren, of no effect, no longer able to exercise the authority it once had. The same verb is used by Hebrews where he says that Christ came to destroy the one who has the power of death. It suggests, not annihilation but disabling. But what is the body of sin that is brought to nothing? ...Later in Romans Paul gives us the key to our understanding when he asks in 7:24 who will deliver me from this body of death? He does not mean he wants to escape bodily existence – disagreeing with the Greeks who said, ‘Soma Sema’ – the body is a tomb! Rather Paul thinks of his body as that which is subject still to death. And he knows Christ will one day set him free! So Paul speaks of the body of sin, his physical body, viewed as that which once was under sin’s dominion, was a body of sin, but now in Christ that dominion is broken. He has been set free from his own “Eth-Sinity”!” Sinclair Ferguson

The last fruit is that of freedom; freed from sin’s reign and freed from sin’s service – 6b and 7. This latter verse actually used the word for

justify, and some mistake this to mean bringing that part of the gospel back here.

But the context is abundantly clear that you have been acquitted from sin's *place* and *power*, and not guilt. Sin may want still to rule you, and seeks still to act as king in your life.

But that is done away with; and freedom, liberty is now ringing out in the life of God's church, God's people, under Jesus.

I have died to sin, the old man was crucified with Christ, my body is no longer to serve sin but holiness, and I am alive from the dead, and free.

As we wrap up then take these few items to heart:

1. The Gospel is incomplete if only addressing the righteousness by faith and not the power of God unto salvation that deals with the dominion of sin. We have a full gospel for the full needs of man.
2. Christians need a bigger dose of these pivotal trues. We are too prone to think that sin is still boss and ruler and master, based upon our struggles and our being overcome by sin. And it really is an important question – does my sin indicate that I am not escaped from sin's dominion? Sin is still sin; the cross does not make sin more acceptable. Then why does sin seem so strong still? Well, the Spirit has more to say in the rest of this chapter and on into chapter 7. Perhaps the best test in all of this is seen that the believer is never reconciled or approving or accepting of sin his or her life. When someone is consistently and chronically justifying sinful behavior in themselves, then we there has to be tough questions asked. Beware, says Paul, do not be deceived – those who practice wickedness will not inherit the kingdom of God!
3. Lastly, do we even need to say that Christianity is Christ? It is not just that He was a good teacher. No – he and his Apostles point to Him as the foundation; his cross, his resurrection, his glory, his

return, all tied up in His glorious person, which has always been at the center of all true faith. No replacement for him!