

Baptized With Christ

Epistle to the Romans

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Let's take our Bibles and look together in Romans 6 and I'm going to read from verse 1 down to verse 10 and I want to speak with you about what it is to be baptized with Christ. Baptized with Christ. There are a lot of people that take this portion of Scripture here in Romans 6 and make it refer to water baptism but what we're going to see is that even though water baptism is a confession of Faith and it symbolizes the death of the LORD Jesus Christ and His burial and resurrection, what Paul is describing here is not water baptism because water baptism cannot purify or take away sin but the baptism of Christ does. Now when I say the baptism of Christ, I'm not talking about when He was baptized in water but it's a reference to His death. Our LORD Jesus Christ, Himself, called His death a baptism of fire that He would endure, and the word "baptism" means "an immersion."

So complete was Christ's work in His obedience unto death, the baptism of fire was His enduring the wrath of God. That's what the fire represents, it represents God's justice. It's not that God hated His Son in any way, He loved Him unto the end, but He took upon Him that wrath that was due that people that He came to save and, therefore, was entirely immersed or consumed in that fire. Just like in the Old Testament, there was the burnt offering. It was entirely consumed, laid on that altar and burnt and that smoke rising up into heaven was a symbol of satisfaction to God which later writing to the Ephesians, Paul described as a sweet savor unto God, that Sacrifice of Christ.

Now if we had been there, a lot of people when they see pictures of the old Israel and how the tents were surrounding the tabernacle and they show the picture of the smoke rising up from that burnt offering, we can't even imagine what the stench would have been like of burnt flesh going up before God. That would have been a constant stench before the people and not something that would have been pleasant even for the high priest to be around, and we imagine the priest wearing these pristine robes, they had to wash those robes as necessary because they were covered with blood. So everything about that Old Testament sacrificial system was bloody and the stench would have been unbearable but it was a reminder as to the stench of the sin of the people for whom the sacrifice was being made and to what degree the LORD Jesus Christ went to lay down His life. Totally immersed, totally submerged into that death, not just a coma or a

swooning, but the law required the death of the Substitute. That's why H called the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb, that blood had to be shed.

So that's the picture we have, so reading here in Romans 6, having just concluded in Romans 5:21, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might Grace reign through righteousness unto Eternal Life by Jesus Christ our LORD," Paul immediately asked this question to reckon by the Spirit of God, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound?" Now here's where the argument is by many who say, "Ah, see? We're supposed to fight the battle for sin ourselves and to force ourselves as much as possible not to sin, and we're not to use the Grace of God as a reason for sinning." Well, here's the number one problem, that in our flesh we continue to sin not just daily but moment-by-moment. Every thought we have is sinful so if Paul were saying that because of the Grace of God then we're going to stop sinning, I would have to say by my own personal experience I know nothing of the Grace of God because I get up in the morning conscious of my sin and I attribute that to the Grace of God. Even while I sleep, the unconscious thoughts that stir me awake sometimes and I might not even be able to remember them in the morning but I know that sleeplessness is due to the fact that this mind and body do not shut down. I know what people say, "Well, you need to get your rest." Well, we live in a fallen world, we live in a depraved body, everything about us is contrary to rest.

So if Paul is saying here, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin," in the sense of not sinning, "that Grace may abound?" then we're never going to be able to stop sinning. I don't believe that that's the sense. You have to have everything in its context here. When it says here, verse 2, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" When he says dead to sin, what he's talking about is that sinful way of life in which we lived before the Spirit of God revealed Christ in us which was, what? It was to look to the works of the flesh, it was to look to our own personal obedience to the law as being something that would attract and bring the favor and approval of God. So in this particular context here in Romans 6, I believe it is speaking specifically to many today who consider themselves to be right with God, having made their profession of Faith and are living under the false notion that somehow by their works they are pleasing God. I will tell you, that is living a sinful life and that is continuing in sin.

So when he asks the question, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound?" he's saying, "You cannot at the same time continue to follow the works of the flesh," and we're talking here about works of the flesh for righteousness or works of the flesh for acceptance with God, you cannot do that and at the same time say that, "Oh yes, the Grace of God is there," like many say, "to make up for my lack." That is not the reasoning of one who has been taught by the Spirit of God and so that's why as we continue through Romans, we're going to see that you can't mix works and Grace and you can't mix your works and the work of Christ as if somehow together now we achieve anything. No, to cease from sin is to acknowledge by the Spirit of God that when Christ died, we died in H and so it's not anything we do or say that gives us right standing with God, it's what Christ did. It's His doing, His dying. It's not what we sacrifice, it's what He sacrificed.

So when you read that in verse 2, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin," there's not a one of us that can say we're dead to sin in our experience. I dare say that I'm more aware of my sin now than I ever was by the Spirit of God because the Light is on. I'll tell you what, if you want to keep the light off in a room and just go in and out and get stuff as you need to and you don't want to see the dust and the dirt, you can get away with it a while until you start sneezing and coughing and trying to figure out why you have all these allergies and then you realize, "Oh, that room's dirty." It's just an apparent false assurance that many have because the Light's out. They look at themselves, they compare themselves with others and they think, "Well, I'm not so bad."

So every once in a while they try to clean up a little bit but they're not dead to sin. That word "dead" there in verse 2 of Romans 6 has to do with a judgment. There was a time and place when those that are God's children, their sin was put to death and it's at the cross. It's when Christ took that sin of His elect on H and so complete was that work that there remained nothing but God's righteousness to impute; that there and then God declared righteous once for all so that when Christ died, I died, when H rose again, I rose again, when He ascended on high, I ascended on high with Him. That's why Paul writing to the Ephesians there in Ephesians 2 says that we're seated with Him in the heavenlies. I'm not physically there but I am in my Substitute; I am in my Advocate, my Representative.

So we have to understand verse 2 in the context of what we already saw in verse 5, the two representatives. You can't be in Christ and in Adam. It's one or the other. Those in Adam will only know condemnation. They've never been dead to sin, died to sin, because Adam is the one that brought them into it, us all. The only reason that I can say that I am dead to sin and that I can no longer live in it, in other words, under that condemnation of sin, under its curse, is because Christ has paid the debt.

Now having introduced this portion that way, it helps us understand better then what we read here in the following when in verse 3 Paul says, "Know ye not." Now this is not something that everybody knows but he's writing to those who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God, been taught of Christ, and have seen in Him their justification before God because of His death, burial and resurrection. Remember in Romans 4:25 and in 5:1, all of this is connected. He was delivered for our offenses, that is, those that the Father gave Him, and was raised again for our justification. In other words, when He was raised, it was because of our justification, it wasn't in order to justify but that word "for" means "because of." That means the justifying was done when H finished the work.

So keep that image in mind because then chapter 5, verse 1, "Therefore being justified," and as we saw, there's no punctuation in the original. It's justified through the death of the LORD Jesus Christ and what He accomplished, then by Faith we have peace with God through our LORD Jesus Christ. That Faith is the revelation of Christ in the Gospel through His Word by which we live, "The just shall live by Faith." The just shall live by Christ in His accomplished work. Keep that in mind, then, when you come to the picture of baptism over here, being buried and raised again because he says, "Know ye not."

There is that knowledge that the Spirit of God gives to those for whom Christ paid the debt and that the Father gave Him from all eternity. He says, "that so many of us [notice] as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" Now the way that's written, it's not talking about individual water baptism and it's also speaking in the past tense as if those of us who were baptized were all baptized at one time, in one place, and in one Person, because it says we're baptized into Jesus Christ. But how? We're baptized, notice, into His death. There you have it, Christ and Him crucified. This is not just a slogan. When we tell people, well, what is it that we preach and believe of the Gospel? It's Christ and Him crucified. That's why Paul said that he "determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," but we have to explain this to people as our Testimony because unless the LORD has taught them, they have no clue. They're still living back here in sin in the sense of trying to work out by their personal obedience. Listen to them talk, they keep talking about their personal obedience. For them the death of Christ, in essence, is something that I recognize, I acknowledge, but now I've got to make good on it by trying to work out in this flesh my own righteousness.

It's like a man I heard one time say this, he said it's like a man walking on a tightrope with that balance bar in his hand and he said, "We're like that. On the one hand, we have the righteousness of Christ to keep us balanced on that tightrope, but on the other hand, he expects our own personal obedience. So together we walk this line." Well, I'm thankful to tell you that my salvation is not a tightrope and it's not something that God has given me to do so that I can make it to the other side. No, my salvation is in the person and work of the LORD Jesus Christ and it was accomplished even before I existed.

So if now He has given me this knowledge, how could it be, then, that I could go back? That's what Paul's talking about here, "How shall we, that are dead to sin?" If indeed Christ has paid my debt and I am justified before God, I cannot go back to any sort of walk religion or works religion. As they say, "I've got to walk the walk and talk the talk?" No, that the salvation, our being dead to sin and that way of life and not being able to live any longer therein.

This is why there's a separation and you feel it. I do. We're around some people that outwardly may be very nice morally, probably put most of us to shame, outwardly at least in their zeal, but like Paul said of the Jews, they have a zeal but not according to knowledge. They go about to establish their own righteousness and are not submitted to the Righteousness of God. That's what Paul is describing here. Throughout the entire epistle to the Romans, there is this warning over and over again and the reason is we need to hear this because our flesh would take us back there. If you don't believe it, when you get a guilty feeling that comes over you because of something you did or said or thought, the tendency of this flesh is to run back to the grave clothes, it's to run back to the fig leaves, it's to start to think, "Well, maybe I'm not a child of God because if I were, then how could I have done that?" That's to completely forget or ignore that that's what we are. That was God by His Spirit pricking your mind and conscience and showing you that you really aren't any better. None of us are. It doesn't matter how long I've lived, today I'm just as much a sinner as the day I was born and that will never be removed until I die and

God raises this body from mortality to immortality, from corruption to incorruption. I look forward to that day but in this flesh dwells no good thing.

So the Hope is, the Rest is, that we live by Grace, live according to the work of the LORD Jesus Christ and what He has accomplished. When it speaks there in verse 3 of having been baptized into Jesus Christ and baptized into His death, it's talking about His death; that just as when He died, He was plunged into that death. He died. That means that that judgment was rendered for everyone for whom He died. So if He died for me, when He died, I died and that's what it speaks of in verse 4, "Therefore," notice, "we are buried with Him by baptism into death." That's not talking about water baptism and it's a one-time burial. It's not a continual burying but it says there in Romans 6:4, "Therefore we are buried with Him," with Him, "by baptism into death: that like as," notice, "Christ was raised up from the dead." So there's the clear connection that this baptism here is not speaking of water baptism but the baptism of His death, "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of Life." That's an important statement right there. To walk in newness of Life doesn't mean that now since Christ paid my debt and the Spirit of God has revealed Him in me, that means now that that old life is gone and I never ever have to worry about sin again. No, to walk in newness of Life is to walk in the newness of that Life that Christ accomplished on behalf of such sinners as we are. That means never trusting this flesh. That means never going back to try to work out some personal obedience of our own to the law, but seeing ourselves as dead to the law and alive in Christ. That means that by the Spirit of God, then, the only place I look is to Christ and the only One to Whom I look is the LORD Jesus Christ.

That's that newness of Life. I can remember before I truly had Christ revealed in my heart, I made a profession of 'faith' back when I was 15 years old and it was a false profession. I no more knew Christ than anything, but I followed what I was taught and my thinking was once that I've made this profession of 'faith' and drawn a line and driven the stake, all these things that people say to do, that when I woke up the next morning everything would be different. Well, that didn't last long and that's where I began to suppress everything that I knew to be evil and start putting on an outward act and it was good. People were fooled but I was fooling myself. It wasn't that I was doing it intentionally but I kept thinking, "Well, if I'm supposed to be walking in newness of Life, then somehow this spiritual soap has to work."

So I kept at it very faithfully day-in and day-out, reading Scripture, memorizing, praying, confessing, doing all these things but in my conscience the LORD would not let me alone until it pleased God to reveal Christ in me and this was after 15 years where I had gone up through the ranks and everybody looked at me as being an example of the next leader of that particular organization for which I was involved and the idea was go out to Africa and be a missionary for a while and then come back to the States and work for a mission organization or preach and teach in one of the schools and train others and all of this stuff, until the LORD arrested me because I truly had that thought in me that by these things I was at least trying and working at sinning less and less. But when Christ was pleased to reveal Himself in me, all that went away.

He showed me my lost estate and when He was pleased to raise me up, this newness of Life, again, I will tell you I'm as much a sinner today as I ever was. In fact, I tell my congregation from time to time if you would put a heart monitor on me that you could actually shine up on the wall behind me and track nothing but my thoughts for a day, if you're a self-righteous religious person, you'd probably go running out the door thinking, "I can't listen to this man. Look at that! Oh, can you believe he thought that? Oh!" But that's self-righteous religious people looking at another and the reason they do is because they never have seen their own blindness, but I'll tell you those that the LORD has taught and have seen their lost estate and that he is brought to Christ in Truth, the newness of Life.

That word "newness," it means the freedom to live knowing that I'll never be condemned for any sin, not just what I commit or say but thought. There are a bunch of people that go around professing to be Christians that cannot live in this newness of Life. In fact, they'll condemn you for it. They'll go, "Oh, okay, so you're just making an excuse for your sin?" No, my sin is no more. That's what it means to be dead to sin. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" How am I being dead to sin going to go back there and try to work it out myself? It's done. It's dead. It's gone. The condemnation is over. Now let me alone. I rest in Christ.

You've heard me say before, when you go to a hotel, they have that little thing you can hang on the door that says, "Do not disturb." That's to keep people from knocking, the cleaners or whatever. You're resting. That's what we hang on our door, "Do not disturb," but I'll tell you, there is the world that would disturb us, there's Satan, there's religion, but there's our own conscience, our worst enemy we live with day-in and day-out in our conscience, and when it raises its ugly head. That's why you can't say, "Well, let your conscience be your guide." No, your conscience is depraved and fallen as you are and it will always, like Adam and Eve, take you back to the fig leaves, but newness of Life is to walk in that Life of Christ that He has earned and established and God has imputed once for all to the account of His people.

I'll tell you, when he gives you eyes to see that, it's like a fresh morning when you hear newness of Life. It is a resurrection because your eyes are turned away from yourself now to Christ alone. But I'll tell you, there's none that can enjoy this newness of Life unless the Spirit of God has taught them and when you run into people that are trying to always bring you back into bondage and always put you back under the law and always trying to preach up their own morality, they do that because they've never been dead to sin because if they were, they wouldn't be talking about their works or their methods or their morality but Christ alone.

That's why in verse 5 he says that, "For if we have been planted," notice, "together." You see, water baptism is an individual confession so it's not talking about water baptism here. This is talking about being "planted together in the likeness of his death." The reason it says that is because I wasn't actually there but planted together, every one for whom He paid the debt was planted together in that death, "in the likeness of His death."

I didn't actually die physically because I wasn't even alive then physically, but it's in the likeness of His death, that's speaking there of substitution. Being planted, the view there is as He was immersed, so I was immersed. And think of the word "planted" as the word "seed," Christ said, "Lest the seed fall in the ground and," what? "Die, it cannot bring forth fruit."

So the fruit that Christ's death brings forth is not some personal righteousness in me, the fruit He brings forth is the salvation of that people, that's why it says planted together all in one time, one place, one sacrifice, one Person, in the likeness of His death, "we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection," and that's talking about what He accomplished by His resurrection which is the proof of our redemption and of our pardon and of our forgiveness and of our justification and sanctification, all of that being the benefits of His resurrection. God the Father would not have raised Him from the dead had He not actually fulfilled and accomplished everything the Father gave Him to do.

So this is the newness of Life in which we live. This is why we don't go back or try to marry His Grace with some personal life of obedience. No, "Shall we continue in sin?" That's called sin. Anybody that thinks that they're going to work out their salvation by personal obedience is living in sin. They can condemn others for living in sin all they want to but they are living in sin and doing so thinking that Grace may abound and it doesn't. They've never known the Grace of God, at least not to that point, and if they are the LORD's then He will reveal Himself. That's our Hope because I know that from my experience. If Christ paid my debt, He's going to draw me in His time.

But this is the description here of this whole portion of being baptized with Christ, baptized into His death, planted together, that's the key word. Not individually but together as His elect in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, and here it is again, verse 3, He said, "Know ye not?" These are things that we know not by our own intelligence but by revelation. Verse 6, "Knowing this," notice here, "that our old man is crucified with Him." There again, a lot of people read that and because they're wrong in the premise, they're wrong here in the conclusion. They think that old man means that, "Alright, my flesh is dead." No, my flesh is very much alive. Where you see "old man," think of Adam. He is the old man.

So, "Knowing this," that any of the works of Adam for which I have been condemned as one of God's elect and live under that condemnation, notice, "is crucified with Him," that means put to death with Him. That means there is therefore now no condemnation. Yes, I bear still the scars of what it is to be a son of Adam but I'm no longer under the representative Adam, it's called here the old man. Think of an old man, he has no more strength and power. Think of an aging old man, no matter what he was in the day of his strength as you watch him age. This past week I spent in my business a number of days enrolling workers that work in nursing homes and rehab centers and I'm telling you, you stare death in the face and you see these people that had at one point a lot of strength but now they're old and unable to care for themselves. That's why they're in these facilities.

Think of Adam that way. Yes, he left his mark but for those who are the LORD's he no longer has any power or strength over them by way of condemnation or curse because it says here, "that the body of sin might be destroyed." What that means is and it's connected to the crucifixion in verse 6, that when Christ died, so complete was His work that that body of sin was destroyed. That's why over in 2 Corinthians 5, if you'll just pause with me here and look in 2 Corinthians 5, here again is a portion that is greatly misunderstood in our day because most people think that, "Well, that means then I'm no longer in this flesh though I am to be tempted to sin." How foolish. It's not this flesh that was destroyed but who we are in Adam, that old man was crucified.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 we read, "Therefore," notice, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation," that word "creature" is the word "creation," "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." So again, reading that from the wrong premise some might like we read back here, to walk in newness of Life, everybody is saying, "Okay, well then, I'm going to sin less and less or have more power over sin." Victory over sin, how many times have you heard that? How's that working for you? No, when it says here, "behold, all things are become new," you have to ask yourself, "Well, what was put away?" What was put away was the sin and condemnation under Adam, that when Christ died, therefore, I no longer stand condemned if He died for me and all things have become new in the sense now I'm no longer under the obligation or condemnation of that old way, but in Christ now live in that freedom and enjoyment of what He accomplished.

That's the newness of Life when it says here in verse 18, "all things are of God," notice, "who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." That's that newness of Life, the revelation of Christ in the heart that shows me that when Christ died and paid the debt, He paid the entire debt and I am reconciled. It's not that I have to do something to stay reconciled or be reconciled, notice it's in the past tense, "And all things are of God," that means it's His work and not mine, "Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." That means as we go out and testify, we're not going out to teach people how to live right and be right and do right. No, we're telling them where true reconciliation is. The ministry of reconciliation is to declare that apart from the work of the LORD Jesus Christ there is no reconciliation and any efforts that you do at reconciliation can only work against you because it's not in the works of this flesh.

Having been reconciled, having been justified, having been pardoned, we're in the "having been," lifestyle right now. That's what we were because you can see in verse 19, "To wit, that God was in Christ," notice "was," so that means that there is no more of this reconciling going on, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." Where? In His death. And again, when you read the word "world," think of that in the ethnic sense because the Jews were of the mindset that the Christ should be just for the Jew, that it's specific. When Paul was preaching "world," he was a Jew but he was preaching to the Gentiles so he's going out and declaring that, yes, there were those Gentile sinners in the world whom God was reconciling in Christ when Christ died.

Notice, "not imputing their trespasses unto them." That shows right there that even though they were elect of God, yet they were under the condemnation, the legal condemnation of that sin until Christ put it away. When God didn't impute their trespasses unto them nor has He ever and even of His elect in the world, but now has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Where you see the word "Word" again, what do you put? Christ, the Reconciler. That's Who we declare. He's committed unto us that Word so that when people ask, we're not trying to convince people against their will but when they ask how is it that we have a Hope of Glory, we tell them it's not in ourselves, it's in the Word of Reconciliation. It's in Christ, the Reconciler, the One by whom I was reconciled to Him.

So in verse 20 Paul says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." Think of an ambassador of a president going into another country. They speak what the president of that country tells them to speak. They represent him. As ambassadors of Christ, as saved sinners by the Grace of God in the work of the LORD Jesus Christ alone, we declare Him wherever the LORD puts us. We're not compromising. We're not trying to get in with others so we can have fellowship. No, we're declaring. We're ambassadors.

"As though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In other words, be reconciled to this God. It's not just making a profession of 'faith' but Who is He and why did He send His Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, into this world, and what did He accomplish by the death of His Son, and for whom did He do it, and where is He now? Those are the five essential questions that we continually bring up in our Testimony to others.

Now here's the point in verse 21 that I want us to see because back here when it says that the body of sin might be destroyed in Romans 6:6, here's what he's referring to, verse 21, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us." That phrase "to be made sin," doesn't mean made sinful but the whole body of sin which was ours, if we're God's elect, was put on Him, hath made Him to be the Bearer of that sin. In fact, this is a short way, an ellipsis is what we call it in literary terms, of "to be made a sin Offering," but rather than say that entirely, the LORD directed Paul to write here "to be sin for us."

But that's that body of sin laid on Him but it's quick to explain, "Who knew no sin." So this laying of the sin on Christ, that body of sin that it might be destroyed, in no way effected Him as the Savior and the purpose was "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." That's the only way to be made righteous is the righteousness, notice, of God. I've mentioned this before, that we use that term "Christ's righteousness" but Christ came and worked it out for His Father and so complete was that work that He accomplished that it's called God's righteousness. He owns it and that's the only righteousness He owns.

So that's how we live now and coming back to my text in Romans 6:6, that body of sin being destroyed, it says, "that henceforth we should not serve sin." In other words, that we should never go back to any other way of forgiveness or of reconciliation or of justification or of peace. You're not going to find peace in trying to work this out yourself.

No, but in Christ alone, and it says there very specifically in verse 7, we'll have to stop here and continue on next time but it says, "For he that is dead," there's the word, "is freed from sin." Dead, how? Dead when Christ died. Dead in my Substitute.

You notice that word "freed" there if you look it up in the original, it means "to be justified from all things whereby we could never be justified before God in ourselves." He that is dead, for whom Christ paid the debt, notice, is justified from sin and its condemnation and its curse. We were saved from the penalty of sin when Christ died, when the Spirit is revealed in our heart, reveals Christ in us, we're saved from that power of sin, in other words, to go back and try to live our own life of obedience. But, oh, thank God this isn't over, that when Christ comes again and when we die, but then when we're raised again, that we'll be entirely freed from the very presence of sin.

All of that is the work of being dead with Christ and that's what verse 8 through 10 explain, "if we be dead with Christ," as our representative, "we believe," this is what it is to know, "we believe that we shall also live with Him," forever; that what I know of Him right now is just the beginning of an Eternal Life of existence with Him, "Knowing," there it is the third time. This is not just a hoax but, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him," He died once and we died once, "For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."

That's our Hope of Glory. I don't know about you but this really, I love this portion of Scripture when the LORD made it plain as to Who this is about, getting our eyes off of men's ordinances. It's not about water baptism, this is about Christ's death and I pray that the LORD give us Comfort and Rest, Peace in knowing this as He's pleased to reveal Christ in our hearts.