

Resurrection and the End of Sin, Part 2

Romans 6:1-11

I want to show you three reasons this morning that the Gospel of a crucified and resurrected Christ means that we cannot continue living in sin. Reason number one: We've been baptized into Christ in order to live a new life. Just trying to summarize verses 3 and 4 there, we've been baptized into Christ in order to live a new life.

Let's read that again. "Do you not know that all of us who've been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we, too, might walk in newness of life."

When we think of that word baptism, I think most of us today imagine in our mind's eye the ritual of water baptism by

which a new convert is immersed in water as a public testimony. It symbolizes his, out, outwardly, it symbolizes his identification with Christ. And that's a fitting symbol for the one who is truly converted, who's been brought from death to life, from error to truth, from sin to righteousness. It's a good, fitting symbol for the one who's been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, into the kingdom of God's beloved Son.

The symbolism of baptism, that is, the full immersion into, under, and up out of the water is a most fitting symbol, perfect picture to portray what God has done for the person who puts his faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus died, was buried, he went down, he went under, and then he rose up from the dead, and by a mysterious work of grace, God reckons the believer to have joined Christ in that death, burial, and resurrection.

Exactly what Paul says, verse 4. "We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism." So it's not our water baptism that does add; the water baptism pictures the spiritual reality. "Buried therefore with him by baptism into death, into the death of Christ." So entering the waters of baptism symbolizes that

old nature that we inherited from Adam, that old nature that bears the guilt of original sin, that old nature that, that is responsible for all the guilt of sin that we incur by doing sins.

A simple washing in the water will not do. Only death kills the old nature. So it's full immersion. That's what pictures the death of the old nature that must die. The seal of death, as we all know if you've ever been to a funeral and you see, seen a body buried into the ground, the seal of death is the burial of the body. Again, that's pictured in the full immersion in the ritual baptism. It's pictured in the full immersion under the water. Why? It's because that's the picture. Burial. No more visible to the, to the eye.

And what is it that is dead and buried? What's the spiritual reality that that water symbolism symbolizes? What's dead and buried is the old self, the old nature, which is driven by sinful desires, which is dominated by sinful habits, a mind that is filled with sinful worries and sinful fears, pursuing all manner of futile ambitions. In fact, for the one, this is what, this is what Jesus is talking about, being baptized into

Christ, it buries the old self, seals the old nature in a tomb. And this is what Jesus is referring to when he says in Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

"Anyone would come after me, let him deny himself," what does that mean? To, it means to refuse to live by the old self. It's basically a departure from the self. Death, burial of the old self, no longer following its desires, no longer pursuing its ambitions. "And for the one who would come after me," when Jesus says, "Let him take up his cross daily," he's saying, Join me in dying every day. It's how you live.

Salvation means it's the end of you. It's disassociation with all that you used to be, all that defined you, all that became comfortable to you, all that became familiar, what was second nature to you, what you didn't even have to think about. Invisible to you. Salvation means that old person, all that stuff, driven by that old sinful nature is dead and buried and gone forever. That's how you need to count it.

It's not that there's anything wrong with the human nature per se. That's because God gave us a human nature, and everything that God created is good. So it's not the human nature that's the problem. It's not the human nature that needs to die. It's the sin that is woven into the fabric of the fallen human nature, that's the problem. It's been welded in there. It's become so thoroughly intertwined that that old nature, it can't be relieved of it. It just must die if it's ever going to be raised to life.

It brings us to Paul's purpose in this first section. Purpose clause, verse four, "We're buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death." There's the purpose clause: "in order that," purpose, "just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we, too, might walk in newness of life." Look, we've been baptized into Christ in order to live a new life, that we, too, like Christ, might walk in newness of life. It's new, not only in the sense of being recent to us in a temporal sense. It's new in a radical sense, in the sense of being fundamentally different than it was, extraordinarily different.

Why not seek him to bring about a genuine spiritual transformation through the death and burial of Christ, in order that we, too, like him, might walk in newness of life? That's what I want. That, after all, is exactly what Christ has done. Having died, having been buried, and after his resurrection, which is confirmed in John 20 as a bodily resurrection, just as we read, the resurrected body that Jesus now lives in, it walks in newness of life, having ascended bodily into heaven, the physical entering the domain of the heavenly. What was formally purely spiritual, a body has entered in Christ. How does that happen? How do we describe that except by using Paul's language? We can only call what Paul called it here, newness of life.

This body is not fit for heaven. It must be glorified to enter there, and obviously, we know our old nature, the sin nature, has no place in heaven. Sin and the deeds of the sin nature have no place in the new life, which is what the Gospel is about, no place in the Holy of Holies, where God is. And this is what the *evangel*, *evangel* is in our evangelicalism, to proclaim new life in Christ, a new kind of life, radically different, extraordinarily different. So that's the first reason that living in sin is emphatically wrong for the Christian. May

it never be. We have been baptized into Christ to live a new life.

Second reason sin has no part in the Christian life, number two: We've been united to Christ in order to live a liberated life. In other words, to live a liberated life, a life of true and total freedom, you must be joined to the Liberator. Verse 5, "If we've been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin, for the one who's died has been freed from sin."

There are two concepts I'd like to bring to your attention here. Both of them are guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, by the historical reality of the empty tomb, the dual spiritual realities: first, of our union with him and second, of our freedom in him. First, union with him and second, freedom in him.

In verse 5 you see that phrase, “united with him.” That’s, it's actually a profoundly strong concept. The word Paul uses here, *symphytos*, literally means, to be born with. *Symphytos*, to be born with. It came to mean to be planted with, to grow up together with. It describes an organic union; united with Christ, born with him, being organically, spiritually united to him. One lexicographer illustrates the use of this word in the ancient world, saying, “In medicine, it refers to the healing of fractured bones and means specifically to grow back in such a way as to connect the two fragments to mend.” Hence, *symphytos* has this meaning of cohesion and interpenetration, so that in time, when you look at that mended bone, you just see one bone.

This is a deep, profound spiritual union, a joining together of life to life, our life with his and vitally, his life with ours, in ours. That's what Paul is speaking of here. The same lexicographer goes on to add an important note on the word, fills in what Paul means by this phrase, united with him. He writes this, “The idea of growth must not be left out because the very use of the word *symphytos* suggests the image of a single plant that is getting bigger and in which the life of the trunk conveys life and fruit-bearing strength to the branches.”



In this resurrected life, united as we are with Christ, we're growing up in him, with him, growing with him, into him. God the Son, he's the Son of God, the Son of Man. His divine nature is in perfect union with his human nature. One person, one personality, and yet he still possesses a truly human nature. And a human nature, by definition, is mutable. It changes, it grows and matures. He grows into greater, fuller expression of the perfect humanity that God has designed, what God intended from before the foundation of the world. And we in union with him, we grow up, Ephesians 4:15, "in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."

Now, the utter incompatibility of sin with this union with Christ's life that we've been given, that's obvious. What's the point, though? Again, two spiritual realities in this section. First, our union with Christ. Second, our freedom. Freedom. True liberation. The new life that we live is one that's completely free of our old enslavement to sin. Verse 6, "Our old self is crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so we no longer be slaves to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin."

There it is, the old self, the old nature, the sin nature crucified with Christ, exposed to shame, put to death in a most cruel and humiliating manner. That's exactly the proper end for the wickedness of the sin nature. We applaud that. Why this fitting, proper end for our old self? In order that this body of sin, that is, the principle of sinning, which tempts us, entice us, entices us, tries to dominate us, in order that that body of sin might be brought to nothing.

That's what we see here; old self crucified in the death of Christ. It means the death of death in the death of Christ. Since the old self operates by a sin-and-death principle, that old self has lost all of its power. The body of sin rendered impotent, its hold broken, its dominion abolished, its power over us destroyed. The Liberator has liberated his people, not by breaking down the door and breaking the chains. No, the Liberator has liberated his people by coming into the prison and killing the prisoner. The guard enters the cell, sees the prisoner has died. He takes the corpse out of the cell, he buries it in the ground, and he moves on.

In the same way, we've died to our former Lord. Slave-master sin no longer owns us because the self that was under his dominion is now dead. "For one who has died has been set free from sin." All that stands before us now is the life and growth of freedom in Christ. Because of his death and burial and resurrection, we too have died with him, been buried with him, and we've been raised with him.

Finally, number three: We've been raised up in Christ, resurrected with him, in order to live a life of glory. A life of glory and sinning do not mix. Look at verse 8, "If we have died with Christ, we believe we will also live with him." Why would we believe such a thing? What's the basis of our confidence that our dying with Christ means we're also going to live with him, we'll share in his resurrection life?

Once again, Paul makes his point appealing to what we already know for sure. Verses 9-11, "We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has mastery over him, no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he

lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ.”

Just briefly, here's his argument, impeccable logic. We know that we, too, will be raised from the dead, that we, too, will receive glorified bodies, just as Christ was raised from the dead, just as Christ received a glorified body. That's our hope of resurrection, that our life in a future resurrection will follow the pattern laid down by his first resurrection.

How do we know this? Three reasons. First of all, because he said it. He said it. Any more argument? Did Jesus ever lie? Did he ever say anything that wasn't true, ever predict anything that wasn't fulfilled? No. We believe that whatever he says is true, whatever he says, he will do, so we take these promises in faith. We know for certain his Word is good, reliable, trustworthy, true. In fact, to doubt him is the very essence of sin. So that's the first reason. We believe that we will follow the pattern of his resurrection because he said we will.

Number two: We know that we, too, will rise from the dead because we experience the same kind of victory over sin that he did. Same in kind, not always, I'll admit, in frequency or in degree. But it is the same ability by the Spirit of Christ to reject sin. And our assurance of these truths grows when we see the same pattern in our lives of the end of sin's dominion as we turn away from sin, not just an outward conformity, but due to an inward change.

What do I mean by inward change? I'm talking about a growing abhorrence for sin, a growing awareness of sin, to see the depth of sin, to hate its insidiousness, to discern its source, to want it gone, to see the outcome in the end of sin and to hate it in ourselves and in everybody else. So we make war against sin. This is what's going on in the inside. We want to make war against it. We hate it. We want to mortify it. We want to repent of it, with, so with increasing frequency, with increasing intensity, we experience greater and greater levels of victory. We no longer smell the stench of death on our lives, but we ourselves become the pleasing aroma of Christ.

So if we've died with Christ, we have certainty, believing we also will live with him because he said it, number one, and because we see, number two, a power over sin that we never had before, which means we share in the death of Christ that he died to sin once for all.

Third reason that we know we will rise from the dead like Jesus did is because we see the same kind of life at work in us. It's a resurrection kind of life. It's a new life, a life that was never there before. "The life he lives, he lives to God." So when we see that same kind of life in us, animating us, filling us with joy, hope, gratitude, giving us spiritual energy, producing spiritual fruit in our lives, motivating us toward righteousness, changing our personalities, which are inflexibly stubborn apart from new life in God, well, you know what? That's proof positive that there is new life in us from God, and it's alive and well in us. It's productive. It's doing things.

Believing God, taking him at his Word, repenting of sin, forsaking sin and mortifying it, living for God to bring glory to God in the name of Jesus Christ, this is what it means to be a Christian. Those who do not live this way, they're either

deceived and disobedient Christians, which I'll admit there are such creatures, but they're soon to repent if they're Christians.

Or more commonly, those who do not live this way are not Christians at all. As you stop to consider yourself this morning, look at Paul's counsel in verse 11. And I might say it's Paul's command, to "consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." What does that look like? Going to get some application of all this good news. How do we apply this?

Now that you've oriented your mind to what is a truly Christian way of thinking, here is the great news of the Gospel, that you don't need to stay the same as you've been. You change, therefore, verse 12, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions." You know what? You have the power of a new life in Christ. You have power of Christ's resurrected life, power to raise the dead. You don't need to obey the passions and desires of the flesh any longer. You can learn new desires, you can have an elevated life, sublimity of thinking with your thoughts fixed on heavenly things instead of

acting like a brute beast, rummaging around for your next sensual pleasure.

You can live an elevated life. Verse 13, "Don't present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who've been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness."

You've been united to Christ to live a liberated life. You've been raised up with Christ in order to live a glorified life. That's a Gospel that's utterly incompatible with sinning, "for," as Paul concludes in verse 14, look at it there, "sin will have no dominion over you." Sin is not going to be your Lord anymore. You are not in bondage to sin any longer. You don't have to commit that sin anymore, because you're not under law; you're under grace. Grace is the power not to sin, and grace is the power to do what's righteous.

Praise God for his amazing grace. Amen? And grace, that's just a shorthand way of summarizing the meaning of this Passion



weekend as we remember his crucifixion for our forgiveness, and as we celebrate his resurrection for our justification. He died to sin once for all, that we too, having died with him, might never die again. He was raised that we, too, might walk in newness of life. And by living this way, we'll give a true and living testimony that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is alive and well, still, on planet Earth, here in America, here in Northern Colorado, and that Christ continues to build his church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.