

The Book of Romans

Lesson 7: Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ: Baptism and Newness of Life -- Romans 6:1-23

At the end of chapter five Paul made a breathtaking statement: where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. And he knew exactly what some clever listener would do with it. If grace overflows wherever sin abounds, then why not sin all the more, so grace can pour out all the more? It is the kind of logic that sounds almost spiritual until you say it out loud. Paul's answer is immediate and horrified: By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? And then he points to the single event that makes such a question unthinkable for a Christian: their baptism. Do you not know, he asks, as though it were the most obvious thing in the world, that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Picture the moment of a baptism. A believer, having heard the gospel and trusted in Jesus, having turned from sin and confessed Him as Lord, is lowered down beneath the water and raised back up again. Paul says something real and wonderful is happening there, not merely a ceremony or a symbol pinned on after the fact, but a true union with Jesus. Going down into the water, we are buried with Him. Coming up out of it, we are raised with Him to walk in newness of life. The water is the place where our faith lays hold of the death and resurrection of Christ, where the old life is left behind and a new one begins. This is why the question that opened the chapter is absurd. A person cannot be buried with Christ to sin and then crawl back into the grave to live there.

From that foundation, Paul builds the whole Christian life. Our old self was crucified with Christ so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. We are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. We are not to let sin reign in our bodies or offer ourselves as its instruments, but to present ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life. The astonishing claim of this chapter is that sin no longer has to be our master. The chains have been broken. We are not helpless captives hoping for parole; we are free people learning to live like it.

Paul ends with a verse you may have known since childhood, and it lands with full force here: the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Two masters, two paychecks, two destinies. Sin pays out death; God gives, as a free gift, eternal life. Read this chapter with joy. Remember your own baptism, or look forward to it if you have not yet obeyed. And hear Paul calling you to become, in daily practice, what you already are in Christ: dead to sin, and gloriously, irreversibly, alive to God.

Group Discussion: Paul says that in baptism we were buried with Christ into death and raised to walk in newness of life (vv. 3-4). Many people today treat baptism as an optional symbol or a private ceremony. How does Paul's teaching here challenge that view, and what difference does

it make to understand baptism as the moment we are united with Christ in His death and resurrection?

Personal Reflection: Paul calls believers to consider themselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (v. 11), and to walk in newness of life. Think about your own baptism, or the new life Christ has given you. Are you actually living in that newness day to day, or have you slipped back into old patterns as though the old self were still in charge? Where do you most need to start living like the new person you have become?

Read Romans 6:1–23

Study Questions

1. Paul asks, Do you not know that all of us who have 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, we too might walk in newness of life (vv. 3–4). What does Paul teach here about what baptism means and accomplishes, how is baptism the moment our faith is united with the death and resurrection of Christ rather than a mere symbol added on after we are already saved, and how is this God's gracious gift received through faith rather than a meritorious work we perform to earn salvation?
2. Paul says we were raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (v. 4). A new kind of life began at your baptism. Are you walking in that newness, or living as though nothing fundamental changed? Name one specific area where the old way of living still has the upper hand, and what walking in newness of life would look like there.
3. Paul says our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, and that one who has died has been set free from sin (vv. 5–7). What does it mean that our old self was crucified with Christ, and how does this passage teach that the believer has genuinely been set free from slavery to sin?
4. Paul speaks of the old self being crucified so we would no longer be enslaved to sin (v. 6). What old patterns, attitudes, or habits, things that belonged to the person you were before Christ, are you still allowing to live in you? What would it look like to count those things crucified rather than negotiating with them?
5. Paul instructs us to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (v. 11). What does it mean to consider or reckon ourselves dead to sin, and why does Paul ground our daily fight against sin in this settled fact about who we already are in Christ rather than in mere willpower?
6. Paul urges us to present ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and our members to God as instruments for righteousness (vv. 12–13). We are constantly offering our bodies, our time, our attention, and our energy to something. Honestly, to what are you most often presenting yourself, and what would it look like to deliberately offer those same things to God this week?
7. Paul says sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace (vv. 12–14). How does being under grace rather than under law actually empower holiness

rather than encourage sin, and why does Paul insist that grace, far from giving us license to sin, breaks sin's dominion over us?

8. Paul says we must not let sin reign in our mortal bodies to make us obey its passions (v. 12). Where is sin still trying to set up its throne and reign in some corner of your life? What is one practical step you can take this week to dethrone it and refuse to obey its passions, in the strength Christ supplies?
9. Paul says we are slaves of the one we obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness; that having been set free from sin we have become slaves of righteousness leading to sanctification; and that the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (vv. 15–23). What does this passage teach about the impossibility of neutrality (that everyone serves one master or the other), about the radically different outcomes of these two slaveries, and about the contrast between what sin pays as wages and what God gives as a free gift?
10. Look back across this pivotal chapter. Paul has shown you baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, the crucifixion of the old self, freedom from sin's slavery, the call to present yourself to God, and the free gift of eternal life. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth from Romans 6:1–23 that you most need to carry into this coming week?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Acts 2:38–41, repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins; Galatians 3:26–27, baptized into Christ, having put on Christ; Colossians 2:12–14, buried and raised with Him in baptism through faith; Colossians 3:1–10, putting off the old self and putting on the new; 1 Peter 3:21, baptism now saves you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ