

Saved: God's Plan of Salvation

Week 6: Baptism into Christ: Buried and Raised -- Romans 6:3–7

Imagine standing at the edge of the water. Behind you is everything you have been, the failures, the guilt, the old self you have carried so long it feels like your own skin. In front of you is a promise so large it is hard to believe: that you can die to all of it, be buried, and rise up someone new. This is not poetry. Paul says it is exactly what happens in baptism. “Do you not know,” he asks, almost surprised we could miss it, “that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” In that water, something real takes place. A burial. A resurrection. A new beginning.

Paul reaches for the most vivid picture he can find: a funeral and an empty tomb. Going down into the water is a burial, the old self lowered out of sight. Coming up out of the water is a resurrection, a new person raised to “walk in newness of life.” This is why the early church immersed people, lowering them fully beneath the surface and raising them up again, because the act itself preaches the gospel. Buried with Christ. Raised with Christ. The form fits the meaning, and the meaning is glorious: the death and resurrection of Jesus, two thousand years ago on a hill outside Jerusalem, become ours.

Notice what Paul says baptism actually does. It unites us with Christ. “If we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” This is the moment our old self is crucified with Him, the moment we are set free from the slavery of sin, the moment we pass from being outside of Christ to being in Him. Baptism is not a badge we pin on after we are already saved, an optional ceremony for those who like that sort of thing. It is the appointed place where a believing, repentant, confessing heart is joined to the Savior it has trusted.

And here is the joy of it: baptism is not a heavy work we perform to impress God. It is the glad surrender of a person who has heard, believed, repented, and confessed, now coming to be buried with the Lord and raised to a brand new life. It is the wedding, not the résumé. So this week we come to the water. Read these few verses slowly, and let the wonder of it settle in: in Christ, the worst of you can be buried, and a new you can rise.

Group Discussion: Paul says that in baptism we were “buried... with him” and raised “to walk in newness of life” (v. 4). Why do you think Paul reaches for the images of death, burial, and resurrection to describe baptism, and what do those images tell us about what is really happening in that moment?

Personal Reflection: Think back to your own baptism, or to the prospect of it if you have not yet been baptized. Have you tended to think of it as a mere symbol or a box checked, or as the moment you were truly united with Christ in His death and resurrection? How might seeing it as Paul does change the way you live as one raised to new life?

Study Questions

1. Paul says that those who “have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death” (v. 3). What does it mean to be baptized “into Christ” and “into his death,” and what does this teach us about the connection between baptism and the saving work of Jesus on the cross?
2. Paul says we were raised to “walk in newness of life” (v. 4). If you have been raised with Christ, your daily life is meant to look different from your old one. Where is the “newness of life” most visible in you right now, and where is the old way still lingering?
3. Paul describes baptism as being “buried... with him by baptism into death” and then raised (v. 4). How does the picture of burial and resurrection help explain why baptism is an immersion, a going down into the water and a rising up again, and how does the form fit the meaning?
4. Coming up out of the water is meant to be the start of a genuinely new way of living. What does “walking in newness of life” look like in the ordinary places of your week, and what is one old pattern you sense Christ calling you to leave buried this week?
5. Paul writes that we are “united with him in a death like his” and “in a resurrection like his” (v. 5). What does it mean that baptism unites us with Christ, and why does this show that baptism is far more than a mere symbol added on after a person is already saved?
6. Many people today think of baptism as an outward symbol of a salvation already received, an optional ceremony rather than the moment of union with Christ. How does Paul’s teaching here challenge that view, and how does it change things to see baptism as the appointed place where a believing heart is joined to the Savior?
7. Paul says “our old self was crucified with him... so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin,” and “one who has died has been set free from sin” (vv. 6–7). What does it mean that our “old self” was crucified with Christ, and how does union with Christ in His death break the power of sin over us?
8. Paul speaks of being “set free from sin.” What is one specific sin or pattern that has enslaved you, and what would it look like this week to live as someone who has genuinely died to it and been set free in Christ?
9. Romans 6 presents baptism as the very point at which we are united with Christ in His death and resurrection, buried with Him and raised to new life. How does this passage hold together the truth that baptism is essential, the God-appointed moment of union with Christ, and the truth that it is in no way a meritorious work we perform to earn salvation, but the glad response of a heart that has already heard, believed, repented, and confessed? In other words, how is baptism neither an empty symbol nor a human achievement, but the place where grace and obedient faith meet?
10. Look back over this passage, the burial, the resurrection, the new life, the freedom from sin. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this truth. If you have not yet been

buried and raised with Him in baptism, what is keeping you from the water? If you have, how is He calling you to live more fully as one already raised?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Galatians 3:26–27, baptized into Christ and clothed with Christ; Colossians 2:11–13, buried and raised with Him through faith in God’s working; 1 Peter 3:21, baptism now saves you as an appeal to God for a good conscience; Acts 22:16, rise and be baptized and wash away your sins; Romans 6:8–14, considering yourselves dead to sin and alive to God.