

Rooted: Core Truths

Week 4: Baptism and New Life -- Romans 6:3–7

There is a moment at a baptism that never gets old. A person steps down into the water, often with a slightly nervous smile, sometimes with tears already starting. Words are spoken about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. And then, for just a second, they go all the way under, out of sight, and the water closes over them. The room holds its breath. And then they come up, gasping a little, wiping their eyes, and the whole place exhales into joy. Somebody claps. Somebody cries. There are towels and hugs and a brightness on the new Christian's face that is hard to describe. Something just happened, something far bigger than getting wet, and everyone in the room can feel it.

Romans 6 tells us what was happening beneath the surface of that water. Paul says that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. We were buried with Him, and we were raised with Him to walk in newness of life. That brief moment under the water was a real burial and a real resurrection. The old self, the person we used to be, enslaved to sin and headed for death, was crucified with Christ and left behind in the water. The person who came up was new, joined to the risen Jesus, alive with His life, set free from the tyranny of sin. Baptism is not a small thing tacked onto the Christian life. It is the doorway through which we pass from death to life, the hinge on which everything turns.

For many of us, baptism has become a distant memory, a date on a card, a story we tell about a younger version of ourselves. We have let it fade into the past. Paul will not allow that. He reaches back to our baptism and uses it as the ground of everything he wants to say about how we live now. You died, he says. You were buried. You were raised. So live like it. And if you are reading this and have never been buried and raised with Christ in the waters of baptism, then Paul's words are an open door and a warm invitation, because the new life he describes is meant for you too.

That is where this week takes us, down into the water with Christ and up into a brand new life. Read these verses slowly. Let Paul remind you what your baptism meant, or show you for the first time what God offers there, and let the joy of that empty grave and that dripping, grinning new believer fill your own heart again.

Group Discussion: Many people today think of baptism as an optional ritual, a symbol added on after a person is already saved, or simply a nice tradition. Paul, however, speaks of being baptized "into Christ" and "into his death." Why do you think baptism is so often misunderstood or downplayed, and what difference does it make to see it the way Paul does, as the moment we are united with Christ and raised to new life?

Personal Reflection: Think back to your own baptism, or to the new life in Christ you long for. Has the meaning of that moment faded into a distant memory, or does it still shape how you see

yourself? Where do you most need to start living like a person who has actually died to the old life and been raised to a new one?

Read Romans 6:3–7

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?” (v. 3). What does it mean to be baptized “into Christ” and “into his death,” and why does Paul treat this as the foundation for everything else he says about the Christian life?
2. Paul says our “old self was crucified with him ... so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin” (v. 6). What is one part of your old self, a habit, an attitude, a pattern, that you keep digging back up instead of leaving in the grave? What would it look like to let it stay dead this week?
3. Paul says, “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death” (v. 4). Why does Paul describe baptism as a burial, and what does the picture of going down into the water and being raised up teach us about what God is doing in that moment?
4. Paul says we were raised “in order that ... we too might walk in newness of life” (v. 4). Where does your daily life still look more like the old life than the new one? Name one specific area where Christ is calling you to start walking in the newness He has given you.
5. Paul’s whole point is that baptism joins us to both the death and the resurrection of Jesus, so that “we too might walk in newness of life” (v. 4). What is this “newness of life,” and how is the Christian life meant to be lived out of Christ’s resurrection power rather than our own willpower?
6. Paul says, “one who has died has been set free from sin” (v. 7). What sin still seems to hold power over you, as if you were still its slave? How does knowing that you died with Christ and were set free change the way you fight that battle?
7. Paul says, “if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (v. 5). What does it mean to be “united with” Christ, and how does this union give us both new life now and the certain hope of resurrection to come?
8. Paul wants us to see ourselves as people who have died and risen with Christ. When you think about your own identity, do you see yourself first as a forgiven, raised-up new creation in Christ, or as the same old person still defined by your past and your failures? How would truly believing Paul’s words reshape the way you see yourself?
9. This passage is one of the clearest in all of Scripture on the meaning of baptism, joining it directly to Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection and to our freedom from sin. Drawing on Romans 6 and the rest of the New Testament, what does baptism actually accomplish, why is it more than a mere outward symbol added after salvation, and what does the burial-and-resurrection picture tell us about how it is to be done?

10. Look back across the passage. Paul has shown you a death you died with Christ, a burial in the waters of baptism, a resurrection to newness of life, and freedom from the slavery of sin. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth about baptism and new life 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, those baptized into Christ have put on Christ; Colossians 2:11–13, buried and raised with Him in baptism and made alive together with Him; 1 Peter 3:21, baptism that now saves us as an appeal to God for a good conscience; Acts 22:16, rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name