

The Cross of Christ

Lesson 9: Crucified with Christ: United to His Death in Baptism -- Romans 6:1-11

Up to this point in our study we have stood, as it were, outside the cross, looking at what it accomplished: the love it revealed, the sin it answered, the wrath it bore, the relationship it restored, the verdict it secured. Now Paul does something breathtaking. He takes us inside the cross. He tells us that we ourselves were there, that we died there, that we were buried and raised. The cross is not only something that happened for us; it is something into which we are brought, so that what is true of Christ becomes true of us. And the place where Paul says this union happens, with startling plainness, is baptism.

He has just finished celebrating grace so lavish that he anticipates a dangerous question: shall we keep on sinning, that grace may abound? His answer is thunderous. By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? And then he explains how we died to sin: 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. Baptism, for Paul, is no mere ceremony added on after salvation. It is the appointed moment when we are united with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

Picture what happens in the waters of baptism. A person goes down into the water, and it is a burial; the old self, the person ruled by sin, is put to death and laid in the grave with Christ. Then the person rises up out of the water, and it is a resurrection; they come up to walk in newness of life, raised with Christ. This is why the New Testament speaks of baptism as the moment we contact the saving power of Jesus' death. It is not that the water itself has magic in it, but that God has appointed this as the place where, by faith, we are joined to the crucified and risen Lord and our sins are washed away in his blood.

This is one of the most precious truths in all of Scripture, and we must let it land with full weight, because much of the religious world has emptied baptism of its meaning, reducing it to a symbol of a salvation supposedly already received. Paul will not let us do that. He says we were baptized into Christ, baptized into his death, buried with him, raised with him. So read Romans 6 slowly and personally. The cross you have been studying is the cross you have been united to. The death that paid for your sin is the death you were buried into. And the resurrection that conquered the grave is the resurrection you rose to share. You are no longer your old self. You died with Christ, and you rose with him, to walk in newness of life.

Group Discussion: Paul answers the question "Why not keep sinning so grace can increase?" by pointing to what happened in our baptism. Why do you think Paul grounds the call to a holy life

not in willpower or rules but in the fact that we died and rose with Christ? What does this suggest about where the power for real change comes from?

Personal Reflection: Paul says our old self “was crucified with him” so that we “would no longer be enslaved to sin.” Is there a sin or pattern you still treat as your master, as though you were never freed from it? What would it mean to actually reckon yourself dead to that sin and alive to God in Christ?

Read Romans 6:1–11

Study Questions

1. Paul asks, “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” and answers, “By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?” (vv. 1–2). Why is it unthinkable for a Christian to treat grace as a license to keep sinning, and what does it mean that we have “died to sin”?
2. Where are you tempted, even subtly, to treat God’s grace as permission to keep a favorite sin, telling yourself that grace will cover it? How does the truth that you died to sin confront that bargain?
3. Paul says, “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” (vv. 3–4). What does Paul teach here about what happens in baptism, and why does he describe it as being united with Christ in his death and burial?
4. Think back to your own baptism, or to what baptism means if you have not yet obeyed the gospel in this way. How does seeing baptism as the moment of being united with Christ’s death and raised to new life deepen its meaning beyond a mere ceremony or symbol?

5. Paul says we were buried with Christ “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” (v. 4). Why does Paul tie baptism so closely to a transformed life, and what does it mean to “walk in newness of life” rather than simply being forgiven?
6. What does “newness of life” look like in a specific, practical area of your life right now? Where is the risen life you received in Christ meant to be showing up that it currently is not?
7. Paul says, “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” (v. 6). What does it mean that our old self was crucified with Christ, and how does union with his death break the enslaving power of sin in our lives?
8. Sin promises freedom but delivers slavery. Where have you experienced sin as a master rather than a friend, and how does knowing that your old self was crucified with Christ give you hope of real freedom rather than mere management?
9. Paul gathers it all into a command grounded in fact: “So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (v. 11). Explain how baptism is the God-appointed point at which we are united with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, contacting the cleansing power of his blood and rising to walk in newness of life, and why this means baptism is far more than a symbol of a salvation already received. How does this truth, that we have genuinely died and risen with Christ, become the foundation for daily putting sin to death?

10. Look back across Romans 6:1–11 as a whole, where you are brought inside the cross, crucified and raised with Christ. Name one specific way that knowing you died and rose with Christ is changing how you fight sin and live for God, and one concrete step you will take this week to walk in newness of life.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Acts 2:38, repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins; Galatians 3:26–27, as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ; Colossians 2:12, buried with him in baptism and raised through faith in the working of God; Acts 22:16, rise and be baptized and wash away your sins; Galatians 2:20, I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.