

'New Life in Christ

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[0 : 00] How about I pray. Our Father, we thank you for this wonderful Easter day where we can celebrate together that he is risen indeed.

! Father, we ask that you would fill us with your spirit so that we might understand the truth in this text so that we might know how to let it change our lives. Amen.

Well, some of you probably know that I was a carpenter before I worked in ministry. I finished my apprenticeship and I got certified and I was a card-carrying chippy.

Even after I left work as a carpenter and started in ministry, well, I was still a chippy, wasn't I? I was still a certified carpenter.

And even though I wasn't working as one, for many years after, I found myself being critical of houses and buildings that I was in.

[1 : 09] You know, sort of looking at joints and windows and seals and doors and things like that. I'd find myself thinking how I might have done it differently or perhaps how I might have smoothed it out or done it better.

You know, all the kinds of things that a cocky young professional tends to think. The point is that I'd done the training and the years of hard work and I had the ticket.

And even after I left and I started working here and I was no longer practicing, well, I was still a chippy. It was part of who I was.

This Easter Sunday, as we celebrate the resurrection, we're going to consider how our joining with Christ in his death and his resurrection changes who we are and what we do.

In Romans 5, which was right before our reading, Paul argues that all humans sinned, everyone.

[2 : 21] We heard that in Isaiah 53 as well, if you were there at St. John's on Friday. As a result of our sin, we lived under its power and control.

But Christ in his death graciously justified all who responded in faith. And so now, even as sin affects everything and we still wrestle with it ourselves, God's grace in Christ makes us righteous. And it assures us of eternal life. That's why Paul begins in chapter 6 saying, Shall we continue sinning so grace may increase?

His emphatic answer is no, of course not. Because, point one on your outline, we died with Christ so that now we live with Christ.

Have a look at verse 2. We are those who have died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death?

[3 : 39] We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Here Paul explains the result of our faith in the death of Christ. And while faith isn't mentioned explicitly, it's alluded to with regard to our baptism into Christ, which happens when we put our trust in him who died for us.

Listen to the way Paul uses the language of connection or union when talking about Christ's death along and ours along with him.

So in verse 3, he says we were baptized into Christ. And in verse 4, it says we were buried with him in baptism. And 4 again, we were baptized into his death.

And in verse 5, we were united with him in his death. Baptized into means immersed in or covered in or brought down into.

[5 : 01] Paul is arguing that we who are connected to Christ by trusting in him have also died along with Christ who died.

Meaning that it is by our faith and the work of the Holy Spirit that we have died his death with him.

It kind of makes me think like being strapped into one of those little cars on a roller coaster. I'm sure you've been on a roller coaster before. I'm assuming you have.

You know that big rubber, hard rubber strap that comes down over your shoulder. And once it clicks in, you're locked in. And so where it goes, you go.

And you know, just as the roller coaster is about to hit the peak, you know, it goes click, click, click, click, click, click. If you're having second thoughts about going down that big hill at that point, well, I've got news for you.

[6 : 04] It's too late. You're going down with it, aren't you? At the start of Jesus' ministry, John the Baptist promised that he who comes after him, referring to Jesus, would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

And that's exactly what happened. We heard that in the Ezekiel passage as well. So when we put our trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit fills us.

It baptizes us, brings us into him, just like the apostles when they first saw Jesus alive. Just like all those people who first believed in Acts chapter 2.

And just like everyone else who has come to believe after. In this passage, as Paul repeats, united with Christ, died with Christ, baptized into Christ and into his death.

He's alluding to the Spirit which fills us and brings us into Christ and us into him when we put our trust in him.

[7 : 22] And why do we put our trust in him? And why do we die with him? Because, verse 5, if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We want to die with him because he is risen indeed. And if we're united with him in his death, we'll be united with him in his resurrection.

Through our trust in Jesus who dies our death, our union with him means, sorry, our union with him in death means that we will live his life.

His new, perfect and eternal life. So, if we died with him and have been raised, how, if at all, does that affect us now?

Well, point two, in dying with Christ, we have died to sin in order to live to God. Verse 6. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

[8 : 52] Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again.

Death no longer has mastery over him. Here Paul explains the result of our union or our connection to Christ in his death and what it means for us now.

Since we died with Christ, our old self was crucified with him so that the body that is ruled by sin is done away with.

You see, before Christ, our bodies and our lives were ruled by sin, weren't they? Paul raises this in chapter 5. In Adam, our human ancestor, sin was our master.

And we were its slaves. And the result of our slavery to sin was death. But God, in his kindness, didn't give us what we deserved for our sins.

[10 : 06] Instead, Jesus went to the cross. And he died in our place to take our sins away. Like that great verse from Isaiah 53 says, We all like sheep have gone astray.

Each of us has turned our own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. So now in Christ, our body, which was ruled by sin, is done away with so that we're no longer slaves to sin.

This means that when we who trust in Jesus' death for us die with Christ, we die to sin.

As Paul says at the start of verse 6, And so we are no longer slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Now just a side note, when Paul says anyone who's died has been set free from sin, he doesn't mean that Jesus who died was ever a slave to sin.

[11 : 24] Jesus is set free from sin, but not because of his own, but because he no longer has to suffer for our sin.

And so now we who are in him, who died with him, are also freed from sin, never having to suffer the penalty of death for sin.

This is why resurrection is so important. As verse 9 says, Since Christ was raised from death, he cannot die again because now death and sin, which he defeated, no longer have any power over him.

And though we who've died in Christ, even though we still die, And yes, death is still terrible because our world and our lives are stained by sin.

And I'm sure that plenty of you here have felt the terrible pain of death. But as awful as it is, we in Christ won't suffer the tragedy of spiritual death that comes from sin because we've been raised with Christ so sin and death no longer rule over us.

[12:57] It kind of reminds me of this game I used to play with my brothers in a backyard pool when we were kids. We'd take turns wrestling an inflated beach ball to the bottom of the pool just by pushing and swimming.

I wonder if you ever did this. We discovered that a beach ball that's about twice the size of your head is pretty much impossible to touch on the bottom of the pool.

And no matter what you did, whether you push or pull or kick or thrash, the moment you rest just for a second, the ball just rockets straight up.

Before Christ, sin kept us down under its power like a deflated ball in water.

But now in the resurrected Christ, it's like he's inflated us with his spirit or with his life and nothing can keep us down, even death.

[14:10] And we never have to worry about sin and death again because verse 10, the death he died, he died to sin once for all.

Once for all. Sin and death now are dead. And so now the life we live, we live for God, counting ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

No longer craving that sin that once held us down, but like Christ, living to God. Or in other words, directing our lives to God, living with him and in him, not in our old selves, but living new lives in Christ.

So what does our new life look like now that we've died to sin? Well, point three, because we're dead to sin, now we live for righteousness.

Look from verse 12. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of your sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who've been brought from death to life.

[15:40] And offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

So far, we've seen that our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus results in our new spiritual reality. And that is, by faith in him, we died with Christ and have been raised with him.

And therefore, we've died to sin so that sin and death no longer rule over us. But like that beach ball that's floating on the water, we still live lives that are surrounded by sin, don't we?

And while we who live by faith in the Son of God can never be dragged back down to live and die under the power of sin, sin and temptation and evil desire, well, they're still all around us, aren't they?

And so Paul says in verse 12, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

[16:57] It might be funny to read this. Since we died and rose with Christ, we know that sin has been defeated and no longer rules over us.

So how could we let sin reign? The clue, I think, is in the phrase mortal bodies.

Because we still live surrounded by sin, we can be tempted by it, can't we? We can give into it. And you will know that sinful temptation is strong.

And when you're enticed by sin and evil desire, we really can be dragged away by it, can't we? And through evil actions.

I'm sure you're familiar with this feeling, you know, when sin begins nibbling at the desires of your heart and you're tempted to give in just this once, just one more time.

[18:09] And even though our eternal sinless lives are secure in Christ, who was raised to defeat our sin, Paul challenges in verse 13 that we mustn't now hand over any part of our body as an instrument of wickedness.

No part of your body. Not our minds. Not our tongues. Not our hands.

Not our eyes. Not our ears. Not our feet. No part of our body.

Rather, he says, offer yourselves to God as those who've been brought from death to life. Offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.

Our whole body. And all of its parts. Including all of our desires. Also our plans. Also our wishes.

[19 : 26] Also our goals. Also our wallets. Even the deepest loves in our hearts. Friends.

Friends. Our old self. Has been crucified with Christ. And we no longer live.

And so now. Christ is our master. And we live under grace. And yes. We have a new and secured life.

In the new creation. And what a wonderful life. We will have there. But in Christ. We have a new life. Now. Because of the death and the resurrection of Jesus. Sin is no longer our master. Now. It's not our master.

[20 : 23] Today. We have a new life. We have a new life. And so. And so. We do not give in to temptation. We don't listen to. Or give in to any of its demands.

So let's live our new lives. Now. Count yourselves dead to sin. But alive to God in Christ. Now.

Now. And may God's will be done for you. On earth. Now. As it will be in heaven.

Meaning. That we know God more and more intimately. That we love him more deeply. That we worship and praise him.

With every breath. Every day. And that we never cease to rejoice in him. Friends. May this be our life.

[21 : 20] Today. Tonight. Around dinner. At work. Now. Sin will not be our master then. It will not reign.

Over your heavenly body. How can it reign now. Over your earthly body. We have died with Christ. And we no longer live.

But Christ lives his new life. In us. So live your new life. In him. Now. Let me pray that we would do this.

Heavenly Father. Thanks that by trusting in Jesus. We have died to sin. So that. Sin no longer reigns. In our mortal bodies. Thank you that we have.

Also been raised with Christ. To have his eternal life. Father. May we begin. To live that life now. Not under the rule of sin.

[22 : 27] But of Christ. And life. Amen.