

# Trinity VI

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[ 0 : 00 ] We were not created to die. Let me say that again. We were not created to die.

We often hear people say such things as death is natural, but it's not. We hear that death is a part of the circle of life, but it's not.

Death is unnatural. Death is the result of sin. It's the result of rebellion against God.

For the wages of sin is death. We would go on to read in Romans chapter 6 verse 23. So we need to hear what God has to say about death and get beyond the Disney theology that skews reality.

But I want to say one more thing about death. We now live in a culture that glorifies death. A culture that romanticizes death is a culture that is severely deranged and coming unhinged.

[ 1 : 12 ] Abortion on demand. Assisted suicide. And the glorifying of death through violence as a means of entertainment is the playground for the demonic.

And that's why I believe the unseen, the demonic realm, is beginning to show their faces. And it's through this nihilistic worldview that is simply stripping away our humanity piece by piece.

We are becoming a culture of self-mutilating and confused people that are living in full defiance to our creator.

So as Christians, what do we believe about death? And is there any hope for all of us who live in the valley of the shadow of death?

Our epistle text here in Romans chapter 6 provides us with the right understanding of death. It also provides great comfort as we approach this subject of death.

[ 2 : 20 ] Although death is to be feared, for the Christian, there is an answer to death and its impending doom.

And that is simply this. Our death has already happened. Let me say this again.

As Christians, we believe our death has already happened. It's already taken place. You might ask, where do you get such an idea? Well, listen again to the beginning of our epistle text here in Romans chapter 6.

Paul writes, Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Therefore, we were buried with him, with Christ, through baptism into death. That just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

[ 3 : 34 ] The crux of Christian teaching, which flows from biblical texts like what we have here in Romans chapter 6, is simply this. Jesus came to abolish death by taking death, by taking sin upon himself.

The resurrection of our Lord is our Lord's breaking the stronghold of death and its cause, sin. By taking death upon himself, our Lord came forth from the tomb, three days later, as the conqueror over death.

Jesus, therefore, has transformed death into life. Our Lord broke the chains of sin and death, and he has brought us now into a new promised land, a new Eden, as he is our exodus from death to life.

That is what we believe. And that's why our epistle text continues with the following words. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, remember, we got that whole death thing over with, by being buried with Christ in baptism.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him.

[ 5 : 06 ] Again, we died in baptism. That the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more.

Death no longer has dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died to sin once and for all, and the life that he lives, he lives to God.

Likewise, you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Our entrance into life is through death.

It is being buried with Christ in holy baptism. We will witness this next week as we will have a baptism here at St. Philip's. That is where our death has already happened.

[ 6 : 14 ] And being buried with Christ, we are now raised to new life through the means of holy baptism. We arise from the tomb of death and we are now to walk in the resurrection and hope of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So what this means is that we should not live in perpetual fear of death, nor should we be promoting or participating in death or entertaining ourselves with death.

As a matter of fact, St. Paul says here in Romans chapter 6 that since we have been buried with Christ and raised with him, we are now called to walk according to this new life, this new life being incorporated into Jesus.

St. Paul says here in verse 11 of Romans chapter 6, Likewise, you also reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Friends, the only death we should be promoting today is a death to our own sin, to our own pride. We should seek to break the bondage of sinful patterns that plunge us into a world of despair.

[ 7 : 40 ] We are to live as baptized Christians, putting our time and our energy into living as free people, as joyful people in Christ, not returning to the shackles of our sin, to our slavery.

There is much confusion today about who we are as human beings and what our lives should look like. As baptized Christians, again, we have been incorporated into Jesus Christ and now we share in his divine life.

That, my friends, is what the Eucharist is all about. We share in his divine life. We participate in the freedom that he has given to us.

We are to walk as new creatures in freedom and hope that we have in Jesus. Therefore, dear people of God, live in your baptismal grace by walking in the way of Christ.

Do not return to your sin because that plunges you into darkness in a world of despair. Martin Luther, in his catechism, says that every Christian, when they get up in the morning or before they go to bed at night, should do one thing.

[ 9 : 24 ] Make the sign of the Holy Cross. That's what he says. Why? To remind ourselves that we are no longer a slave to sin, death, and the devil.

In Christ, you were buried and you have died with him. You have been raised to new life through baptism. And in this new life, we are called to walk in the way of Christ joyfully, serving God and seeking to serve others.

Friends, that's when we really begin to live. When seeking to be less selfish and to be focused more on serving our Lord and others, that is when you begin to live.

As we confess in the liturgy before receiving the absolution, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life.

That we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life. To the honor and glory of thy name through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[ 10 : 49 ] And all God's people said, Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.