



**Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture**

**SERMON TEXT:** Romans 6:1-4

**KEY POINT(S):** Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection.

**FOR LEADERS**

- **It’s BAPTISM WEEK!** – *As you may have noticed for this week, we have taken a momentary pause out of Matthew in lieu of focusing in on baptism and celebrating some of the amazing work that Jesus has been doing in and throughout Emergence! So, for our discussions this week, we will step away from Matthew this week and take a look at Romans 6.*
- **End of Spring ’19 Communities!** – *It’s come fast, but the end of our Communities Season is nearly upon us! Next Sunday (the week of 6/9/19) will be our 7<sup>th</sup> and final week of this Communities Season. As per usual, we will add a few prompts within this Discussion Guide to help you look back on some of the fruit your Community has seen this year, and spend some time thanking Jesus for his faithfulness!*

**GETTING STARTED**

- ⇒ **Icebreaker** – “Which of the testimonies from the baptisms this week stood out to you most and why?”
- ⇒ **Communities Video** - Watch this week’s Communities video!

In both the sermon from this past week and the Communities Video, Ryan mentions that, for those who consider themselves Christians, their primary identity is first and foremost, “in Christ,” and not in anything else. Moreover, this simple reality should change everything about the way in which we live.

- [1]** Why is it important that a Christ follower first sees themselves as “in Christ”? In what way should this simple perspective change the way in which someone lives?
- [2]** What happens when a Christian places or finds his or her identity first in something else, and *then* in Christ secondarily? Are there any places in your own life where you have experienced this, personally?

**DEAD TO SIN**

Romans 6 begins with Paul responding to an objection – “*Are we to continue to sin so that grace may abound?*” And, while on paper, this objection may seem far-fetched, the reality is that many Christians today use similar reasoning to justify sin in their lives.

**Ask for a volunteer to read Romans 6:1-4**

- [3]** What is it that Paul says in the previous paragraph (Rom. 5:18-21) that might lead someone to ask such a question?
- [4]** In what way might someone try to use this type of reasoning in their lives to justify sin? Have you, yourself, ever struggled with thinking this way? Explain.
- [5]** If this way of thinking is wrong (as Scripture clearly demonstrates), then what should be the most proper response to God’s grace? Where have you seen this become a reality in your own life?

Paul personally responds to this objection by appealing to a singular truth – that those who are united to Christ in faith have died to sin, and he revisits this concept many times (see Romans 6:11, 7:4, 6, Gal. 2:19-20, Col. 2:20, 3:3).



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- [6]** In your own words, how would you explain what it means to be “united to Christ in faith and dead to sin?” How has this truth worked itself out in your own life?
- [7]** What does it really mean to be “dead to sin?” Does that mean that Christians no longer struggle with temptation? Explain.
- [8]** In what way does this truth from Paul echo what Jesus taught us a few weeks ago in Matthew 7:15-20?

***Leaders:** In Romans 5, Paul makes a statement that says that “where sin increased, grace abounds all the more.” He is speaking of course, that the greatness of Jesus’ sacrifice far exceeds the destructive power of Adam’s sin. Obviously, this does not mean that we should “go on sinning” so that grace may abound (as Paul says in Romans 6). Many half-hearted Christians hear a statement like this as simply accept an ignorant logic of, “Well, I may as well sin... Jesus will forgive me,” or “my sin isn’t really that big of a deal.” This, of course, is foolishness. We know that our sin greatly burdens the heart of God. It was your sin, and mine, that murdered God’s Son, and we must never forget this lest we become arrogant, ignorant, or even proud.*

*Nevertheless, Jesus’ grace abounds, and for those who turn to unite with Christ are put to “Death” to sin, meaning that the power of sin no longer rules over us, but rather the power of the Holy Spirit. Does this mean that we no longer are tempted? No. Does it mean that we will never again sin? Unfortunately, no. But it does mean that the spirit within us that thirsted for sin is now dead, and we are instead raised up into Christ, with His Holy Spirit, which thirsts for life and fruit. (For more on this, study Galatians 2:20.)*

*Lastly, this teaching from Paul in Romans is a direct parallel to what we just studied in Matthew where Jesus is speaking of a good tree bearing good fruit and a bad tree bearing bad fruit. What child of God, who has put sin to death in their life to be raised in life with Christ, continues to go on sinning and carelessly grieving the heart of God? Is that person really a child of God? We should ask these things of ourselves. If Jesus says that a good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree bad fruit, then what is the fruit of my life? What mark does my life leave upon those around me, and what does that communicate about my relationship to Jesus?*

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### BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST JESUS

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- [9]** According to verses 3-4, what is the symbolism expressed by Christian baptism?
- [10]** What do you think Paul means by saying “baptized *into* Christ Jesus” (v. 3)?
- [11]** Do you Paul is speaking here as a mark of Christian maturity or a mark of Christian conversion? Given your answer, why do you think so many Christians postpone baptism, sometimes until they have been walking with Jesus for decades?
- [12]** Ryan mentioned this past week that baptism symbolizes not just our identification with Christ in His death, but also in His resurrection. According to what Paul says here in (v.4), when do we begin to experience the resurrection power of God?
- [13]** Where have you personally experienced God’s power to help you walk in newness of life?

***Leaders:** There are two types of baptism: Spiritual and Physical. The Spiritual baptism is the more important of the two, where we accept Christ’s sacrifice for our sin, are covered in His blood, put our old self to death, and are reborn with a new heart. There life is no longer their own, but they are now Christ’s and Jesus rules their life as Lord and Savior. In other words, this is the point at which someone truly becomes a Christian. The physical baptism, on the other hand, is the practice by which we (the Church) use to celebrate and worship Jesus through this newness of life. There is nothing magical about the physical baptism, but it is an outward (physical) expression of an inward (spiritual) reality. We use water because going underneath and then back up from the water symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus—the very life we are baptized into.*

*In verse 4, Paul explains that the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead has also raised us into newness of life. It is at this point, in the newness of life, where we truly realize the resurrection power of God.*



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**ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM**

Consider the following common points and questions regarding baptism. How would you counsel someone who approached you about:

- Whether baptism is a requirement for salvation?
- If it is appropriate or not to baptize babies?
- Whether they should get baptized again as a believer if they were already baptized as an infant?
- Feeling or thinking that they are “ready” to be baptized?

*Leaders: The point Jesus is making is threefold: 1.) He, himself, is the Messiah 2.) He’s ushering in a new Covenant for God’s people 3.) This covenant should be an incredible realization of joy, celebration, and rejoicing for God’s people.*

**PRAYER**

- [1]** Pray for all those who were baptized across our church this past week! Pray that they would be blessed as they walk in the newness of life that is theirs in Christ, and that they would have ministries that would bring glory to God and lead others to know Jesus as well!
- [2]** Pray also that God would continue to use His Church to share the amazing truth of the Gospel, that more and more we would continue to see people turning away from sin and death into the arms of Christ, and to new life in His name.