

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

July 28, 2021

Romans 6:1-14

New Life in Christ

Baptism in itself is symbolic of the decision we make for Christ. It is public testimony to the very real personal experience of our receiving the indwelling Spirit of God and His birthing in us our own eternal spirit. Hence we have become a new creation of God and here display it to the witnesses around us. 2 Corinthians 5:15-18, Galatians 6:14-16. A few weeks ago we discussed some of the various alternate expressions that baptism represents. Commencement of ministry, presentation of sacrifice, Rabbinical identification, witness to Truth and unity with the Trinity of God. To Christians all of these testify to unique and wonderful aspects of our relationship to our Savior. Baptism has been used for other purposes and rituals especially among the Jewish followers of Rabbis as in the weekly ceremonial cleansing in the Mikvah and in the entrance and acceptance into religious communities such as the Qumran. Prophets baptized as well for repentance and remission of sin as we saw in the baptism performed by the last of the Old Testament prophets, John. Mark 1:4, Luke 3:15-17.

In today's passage, Paul in his discourse lays out the emphasis on the picture of our joining in death with Christ and thereby being dead to sin. Vv 6-11. We are to reckon or count or consider ourselves dead to sin. This is the hard part because sin does not know or care that we are dead to it. The battle between the spirit and the flesh must be fought by the mediator of the soul now functioning in unison with the mind of Christ. Romans 7:25, 1 Corinthians 2:10-16. This powerful passage helps us to find our way in daily life but it also provides hope which enables us to triumph over sin. That hope is found in resurrection.

The new life we walk in in verse 4, also pictured in baptism as we rise out of the water, begins the moment we are saved. It is a process known as sanctification which is cleansing and growth done for us by the Holy Spirit. It is literally a setting apart which takes the rest of our life. The hope shows up in verse 5. The resurrection of Christ tells us that we too will join him in this. A true and literal rising from the dead. Begun when our spirit is born at salvation and completed on that great and wonderful day when we will rise bodily. Daniel 12:2, 1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 51-53. Who causes this change? Jesus. Philippians 3:20-21. If we are to be like Him, what was He like? Luke 24:36-43. When it comes to sin, we must ask, can we control our behavior knowing we will live forever in new bodies? Remember back when we talked of being considered worthy of heaven. Don't we owe our allegiance and best behavior to the Lord out of respect for His sacrifice? Sin is best conquered by walking in the Spirit. Romans 8:1

Our final verses tell us to remove sin from the throne of our lives, now rightfully assumed by Christ v12 and to restrict each part of the body as each of us struggles with unique sins of the flesh. In fact we must redirect our physical activities to now glorifying and serving God to manifest new life in Christ. v13. Verse 14 explains to us that the law and its punishment no longer holds power over us. The response to the grace of God in our lives ought to be a gratitude that willingly lets go of sin, desiring to please Him. Romans 5:19-21.