

Rom 6.1-14—Do you understand your baptism?

The message of baptism, vv. 1-4

- I. Paul anticipated that some of his readers would respond to what he said in 5.20-21 by saying, “if where sin is increased grace abounded all the more, then why don’t we continue in sin so that grace may abound?”
- II. So in 6.1-4, he responds to such wrong-headed thinking by directing his readers to the message proclaimed in their baptism.
 - A. If we understood our baptism we’d see that it’s inconceivable to think that a Christian can continue in his old way of life, vv. 2-4.
 - B. Our baptism assures us that we’ve died to sin and been raised up with Christ to a new life. How can someone be dead to something and still live in it?
 - C. Those who think they can be dead to sin and still live in sin understand neither their baptism nor the gospel itself.
 - D. A person who’s in Christ is by definition dead to sin and alive to a new life. It’s simply not possible for them to be alive to sin in the same way they were before they died to it.
 - E. And according to Paul, this is the very message our baptism preaches to us and calls us to believe: we are in Christ; therefore we are dead to sin and alive to God. To live contrary to this would be a denial of who we really are.

The reality behind baptism, vv. 5-10

- I. It’s important to understand that baptism is a gospel sacrament, an ordinance instituted by Christ to preach to us the good news of what it means to be united to Christ by faith.
 - A. It testifies to us, not of what *we* have done, but of what *God* has done for us in and by Jesus Christ. It’s a sign, not of our *faith* in Christ, but of the *Christ* on whom our faith rests.
- II. We can see this if we look at the spiritual reality behind our baptism, which Paul explains in v. 6:
 - A. We know that *our old self was crucified with Him*.
 1. When we believe on Christ, our old Adamic self is crucified. That is to say, we *die* to the old world order

of Adam in which sin reigns. This cannot but happen because by faith in Christ we *become alive* to a new world order of Christ in which grace reigns, Rom 5.12-21

2. And this transfer from the kingdom of death and sin to the kingdom of life and righteousness (2Cor 5.17; Col 1.13-14) is not something we do by our faith or even something which baptism itself accomplishes; it’s something which God does for us, which we believe by faith, and which our baptism then signifies and seals.
- B. Our old self was crucified with Christ *in order that* the body of sin might be brought to nothing.
 1. When we were in Adam, our bodies were under the dominion and subjugation of sin.
 2. But now that we’re in Christ, that dominion is broken and our bodies belong to Christ and His kingdom in order that we might be an instrument of righteousness.
- C. Therefore *we’re not longer enslaved to sin*.
 1. Of course sin still indwells us and we still battle the influences and habits of our old self; but we’re simply not enslaved to sin any more. We’re now under the happy dominion and subjugation of His grace.

Living in light of our baptism, vv. 11-14

- I. If you’re a new creation in Christ (2Cor 5.17), as your baptism testifies, then you should be living in light of that reality every day of your life.
 - A. The message of your baptism and the spiritual reality to which it points are to have a radical impact on how you see yourself and on how you live. That’s the essence of Paul’s message in this passage.
- II. So do you understand your baptism in this way? Do you see it as something you’ve done or as something that assures you of what God’s done for you in Christ?
- III. And how much does your baptism play into your self-image and self-identity? Is it just a thing in your past or is it a powerful incentive and directive to how you live your present? According to Paul, it should profoundly affect your present, everyday life, vv. 2, 11-14.