



ISSUE

25.2

January 8, 2023

Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN
OF THE
OLSEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McNear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

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Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

Baptism and Death to Sin

By Kyle Pope

In the opening verses of the sixth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans he offers some powerful teaching on how one can become dead to sin and the role baptism plays in this death.

Dead to Sin

Paul demonstrated in the previous chapter how following the example of Adam's sin left man in need of a Redeemer. Near the end of chapter five Paul declared: **"Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more"** (5:20). This very statement, sets the stage for what Paul moves to address in chapter six. If grace abounds, when sin abounds, some might ask: **"shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"** (6:1b). To which Paul answers forcefully: **"Certainly not!"** (6:2a). The reason for this is because Christians in their very conversion die to sin. Paul asks, **"How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"** (6:2b). Christians have **"died to sin."** That is not to say that they are incapable of sin, but rather that they should consider themselves as dead to sin and its condemning power. To continue to live in that to which one has died is senseless.

How does this death to sin come about? Paul explains: **"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 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” (6:3-4). The statements in this chapter about baptism are some of the most powerful texts in the New Testament that explain the significance, method, and importance of baptism in its relationship to conversion. Consider what is taught:

The Significance of Baptism

Paul tells us through the Holy Spirit that in conversion one is “bap-

tized into Christ.” There are great blessings that are found “in Christ.” In this very epistle Paul says when one is “in Christ” he is “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24). He will later declare, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1a), and that nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39b). Yet, how does one who is *out of Christ* move to be “in Christ”? Paul teaches us that this happens through baptism. He tells Christians in Galatia, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).

The Method of Baptism

The text continues, “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection” (6:5). The phrase “united together” in the Greek is *sumphutos* meaning—“born together with, of joint origin . . . implanted by birth or nature” (Thayer), “planted together” (KJV). This planting together in baptism is in death’s “likeness” (Gr. *homoiōma* meaning—“that which has been made after the likeness of something . . . representation . . . resemblance” Thayer).

In declaring that the convert is “united” or “planted” together with Christ in the “likeness of His death” Paul tells



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us that there is something about baptism itself that resembles Christ's death. Only if baptism is an immersion, could it be said that it is in the **"likeness"** of Jesus' death. The verb translated **"baptize"** in Scripture, is the Greek word *baptizō* meaning—*"to dip in or under water"* (Liddell & Scott). Thus, when the Lord, as in Mark 16:16 commands, **"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned,"** He is commanding those who would become His disciples to believe and **"be immersed."** When one is immersed in water he submits his body to the handling of another person, as if he was a dead body being placed in the grave. Sprinkling or pouring does not mirror this **"likeness."**

The Importance of Baptism

Paul continues, **"knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin"** (Rom. 6:6, 7). We observed above that there is no other way for one to move from being *out of Christ* to being **"in Christ"** other than through baptism. In the same way there is no other way for a person to be **"crucified with Him,"** and then be **"buried with Him,"** experiencing a spiritual death to sin in order to become **"freed from sin,"** except through baptism. The importance of baptism is seen in the fact that unless one has been baptized he is not **"freed from sin."** In Paul's own conversion this was made quite clear. Although Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus, Paul waited, blind for three days (Acts 9:9), until Ananias came and told him, **"Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord"** (Acts 22:16). Paul was not

"freed from sin" until he was baptized.

Paul will speak of this as crucifying the **"old man."** In his epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians he used the figure of the **"old man"** in reference to our old sinful character. In baptism, Paul says, this old character is **"crucified."** For the Christian this is both a past deed that is accomplished in conversion and an ongoing activity. Paul told the Colossians that they should **"not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds"** (Col. 3:9). Yet, to the Ephesians he urges them to **"put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind"** (Eph. 4:22-23). We see in these two texts that the crucifixion of the **"old man"** involves both the initial **"putting off of the old man"** in conversion and the ongoing choice to **"put off**



the old man” through faithful obedience to God.

Paul argues, **“if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him”** (Rom. 6:8). Christ’s death and resurrection illustrate the potential of man’s own resurrection. In that Christ conquered death, **“Death no longer has dominion over**

Him” (Rom. 6:9b). When a person is united with Christ in His resurrection through baptism, he like Christ, is delivered from the dominion of death. Those who reject the offer of salvation in Christ remain under death’s dominion. Although they will be resurrected on the last day it will be a **“resurrection of condemna-**

tion” (John 5:25-28). As Daniel declares, they will awake to **“shame and everlasting contempt”** (Dan. 12:2). In Christ’s death, **“He died to sin once for all”** (Rom. 5:10a). His sacrifice was offered for **“all,”** but only those who accept this offering will reap its benefits.



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