

“I Am Dead To Sin. . .”

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Read Romans 6:1-14

Earlier Paul established the reign of grace through righteousness over the reign of death through sin (Rom. 5:20, 21). The tyranny of sin has been overthrown by the power of the cross. Citizens long enslaved under the brutality of an unbearable despot dance in streets flowing with freedom. Yet like many long enslaved, freedom brings its own questions. Learning to live free when all one knows is oppression has its own difficulties. “If my sinning causes the grace of God to abound, should I go on sinning?” Paul patiently unpacks this truth tenderly. Although such thinking is abhorrent, it is not sourced in the defiant, but in the ignorant. Death is fundamental to Paul’s instruction. An aspect of death is separation. His initial premise comes out quickly and in a short burst, “How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (v. 2). Such a statement begs the question, “How did I die to sin?” What follows is an explanation of what it means to be “dead to sin.”

Our baptism by the Holy Spirit into the life of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27) created a union with Christ. This union is not a mixture or blending, but rather our lives are folded into His life. What we are in our own identity no longer exists. Our existence is lost in His. Who He is dominates and controls who we are and how we live. The picture used to describe this union is baptism. Our English word “baptism” is a transliteration of the Greek word “Baptizo” and this word simply means “to immerse.”

When we received the finished work of Christ in our behalf (John 1:12), we were immersed into the life of Christ. This “baptism” transferred the merit of His work to our account. In this “baptism,” our standing before and with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit changed. Specifically, the Father receives us as children (Gal. 5:26), the Son’s work is attributed to us (2 Cor. 5:21), and the Holy Spirit bears His fruit through us (Gal. 5:19-21). His character is produced in and through earthly vessels (2 Cor. 4:7-12).

Because of this “baptism” into the life of Christ, the value of His work is attributed to me. Hence Paul writes, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?” Notice the consequences of this union.

What did His death accomplish?

- His death won new life (vv. 4, 5, 13).
- His death destroyed the body of sin (vv. 6, 7). His death brings freedom from sin’s enslavement.
- His death destroys sin’s rule (vv. 8-12). His death liberates enslaved citizens.
- His death moves citizens of grace to offer up their services to its government (v. 13).
- His death establishes a new government characterized by grace (v. 14).

There is a tendency to see this as only “truth” that has no direct or immediate value to real life experience. Such thinking is a travesty against the power of the cross.

Continued on the other side...

Paul's entire point is the life changing impact that the cross has on the circumstances of the individual.

What does this mean for me? If the value of His death is attributed to my account, then . . .

- First, I will also participate in His resurrection (vv. 4, 5, 8).
- Second, my body of sin has been done away with (v. 6).
- Third, I am freed from sin (vv. 6b, 7).
- Fourth, death is no longer master over me (v. 9a).
- Fifth, I am alive to God (vv. 9b, 10, 11).
- Sixth, sin is no longer reigning in my mortal body (v. 12).
- Seventh, I should no longer present the members of my body to sin (v. 13).
- Eighth, I should now present the members of my body to God (v. 13).
- Finally, I am living under grace, not law (v. 14).

Paul's point is that grace reigns because the cross still stands. You and I as His people and in union with Him having His work attributed to our account are completely free from sin's kingdom. We are no longer citizens of sin's reign. We are free from sin's domination. We are free to live in the resurrected life of Christ. It is the glory of the Father that now radiates from our earthen vessels. The burden of sin has been removed.

I am no longer . . .

- A transgressor of God's boundaries
- A debtor in the slave market of sin
- An object of God's displeasure
- Held at a distance and banned from entering His presence
- An illegal alien in the kingdom of righteousness
- Dead to God
- Alive to sin

I no longer serve to gain merit, but serve because I have merit. Herein is the power of the cross: God's good pleasure is poured out on me because I have been immersed into the life of Christ, and the value of His cross work has been attributed to me.

This is . . . Jaw-dropping, Eye-popping, Limb-raising, Hand-clapping, Feet-dancing, Leg-hopping, Mind-blowing.

Many of us have not experienced the power of the cross in our circumstances simply because we have never heard of such liberating truth. Paul's "formula" for appropriating what is already true is three-fold.

- First, know the facts (v. 6).
- Second, consider it true. This means lean into it (v. 11).
- Third, live the immersed life. This means act like it is true (vv. 11-13).

All of the heartache that is yours because of sin's reign has been removed. Paul is inviting us to live in the power of the cross. May you enter fully into the power of cross.