

Lesson 31 - BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST *Romans 6:1-5*

(6:1) - As he had been inspired by God the Holy Spirit, in the first five chapters of this epistle, the Apostle Paul had defined and described the true Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in and by the Lord Jesus Christ as clearly as it can be defined and described. Grace is God's sovereign, free, unearned and undeserved favor towards sinners who have nothing to merit salvation or any blessings from God. The best works of the best of sinners cannot make them righteous or measure up to the perfect righteousness of the law found only in the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace reigns through Christ's righteousness imputed by God to His people and received by them in God-given faith. So salvation comes by virtue of the righteousness of God found only in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace excludes any and all works, no matter how moral and sincere in the eyes of men, from forming any part of the ground of a sinner's salvation. Salvation is not by the works of sinful man in any way, to any degree, nor at any stage of that person's life. Whenever unbelievers, especially those who trust in some part to their own works for salvation and /or righteousness, hear this message of true grace, they most always seek to attack it with the argument - ***"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"***

The reason unbelievers raise this question against the true Gospel is that the true Gospel exposes and excludes their evil, ungodly motives that inspire them in morality, obedience, and religious service. The natural man operates by the ungodly motives of legalism and self-righteousness. This involves both: (1) threats of punishment and loss of rewards, and (2) mercenary promises of earned rewards. The true Gospel exposes such motives to be evil, self-righteous, and ungodly, not because they inspire immorality, insincerity, or irreligious activity as men view these things, but because they:

- (1) Deny the glory of God in the salvation of sinners by His grace through the Lord Jesus Christ and based on His righteousness alone (***Rom. 3:19-25***);
- (2) Deny the glory of the redemptive work of Christ in His work unto death to produce the only righteousness by which God can justify the ungodly (***Gal. 2:21; 5:1-4***); and
- (3) Give sinners room to boast in their works and/or their will-power (***Eph. 2:8-9***);
- (4) Deny the power of God's grace to inspire and motivate God's people with the godly motives of grace, love, and gratitude (***2 Cor. 5:14-15***).

(6:2) - Paul answers this objection by posing another question that we all need to consider and answer with God's Word. He begins by showing the impudence of such an objection - ***"God forbid***. It is certainly NOT God's revealed will by way of commandment, nor is it God's way, to promote sin in any of His people. ***"God forbid"*** that any true believer (sinner saved by grace) should use the absolute freeness of God's grace as an excuse to go on in sin without fighting it and repenting of it! But notice how Paul supports this - ***"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"*** Our death to sin provides a great and godly motive for obedience to God. So, as true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the question we must answer is, "HOW are we ***"dead to sin"***?", and what does it mean to no longer live in sin? In the following verses, the Apostle Paul shows us that the answer lies both in a believer's LEGAL and SPIRITUAL union with Christ. The LEGAL union forms the ground of a believer's right relationship with God and provides the basis for the godly motives of grace, gratitude, and love for fighting sin and for the obedience of faith. The SPIRITUAL union is the fruit of our legal union with Christ and is our personal experience of God's grace in our lives.

(6:3) - Paul begins here with a believer's LEGAL union with Christ described in the term **"BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST"** - **"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?"** The first thing we must understand is that the baptism of which Paul writes here is NOT the Christian ordinance of believer's baptism which is a believer's public confession of union with and faith in Christ symbolized by immersion in water. Paul speaks here of a believer's LEGAL union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Many believe the Greek word for **"baptism"** (generally **"baptizō"** or **"baptizma"**) means "immersion" or "submersion," and these certainly are alternative meanings of the word. The basic meaning of **"baptized"** is **"placed into."** Paul's meaning here is this - **"Don't you know that as many of us as were placed into (united with) Christ were placed into (united with Him) in death?"** Paul's meaning here is not the ordinance of Christian baptism, but it is what believer's confess in following the ordinance of believer's baptism - that when Christ died, I died with Him; when Christ was buried, I was buried with Him; and when Christ arose from the dead, I arose from the dead with Him.

How can this honestly be said of believers? It can be said honestly of every true believer due to their LEGAL union with Christ as He stood for them, in their place, as their Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. God chose His people IN CHRIST before the foundation of the world and made Christ to be their legal Representative and Surety. This means Christ was made responsible and accountable for all their sins imputed (legally charged) to Him. As their Surety, He agreed to do what was necessary to settle their account by paying their debt to God's justice. As their Substitute Christ became incarnate and took their place under the law. He suffered, bled, and died to pay their sin-debt and redeem them from their sins (**Isa. 53:4-6; Matt. 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4-6; Heb. 1:3; 2:14-17; 10:10-14**).

(6:4) - **"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"** - Just as we were legally united (placed into) Christ in His death, we were legally united (placed into) Christ in His resurrection. In His death, Christ established righteousness for His people by which God is just to justify the ungodly. This is **"the glory of the Father"** or **"the glory of God"** (**Rom. 3:23**) of which we all by nature come short. It is the merits of Christ's obedience unto God and the very **"righteousness of God"** revealed in the Gospel (**Rom. 1:16-17**). Christ's righteousness imputed to His people is not only the ground of their justification before God, it is also the source and power of their spiritual life wherein they **"walk in newness of life."** This **"newness of life,"** as we shall see, is not a life of disobedience and unchecked, unrepented sin. It is a life of faith in Christ, following Him in His Word. It is living unto God's glory as revealed in the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(6:5) - **"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:"** - Just as Christ's righteousness, which He alone worked out for His people, demanded His own resurrection from the dead, His righteousness imputed to His people demands that they too be resurrected from the dead, both spiritually in their new birth and finally in their glorification. Sin demands death; righteousness demands life, and righteousness can only be found in the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (**Rom. 5:21**). This also proves that all whom God has justified, all for whom Christ died and arose again, SHALL BE RESURRECTED UNTO LIFE EVERLASTING! Not one sinner for whom Christ died shall perish in eternal death and damnation. This causes us to look to Him alone as **"the Author and Finisher of our faith"** (**Heb. 12:2**).