

Lesson #5

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

*We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death,
in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father,
so also we might walk in newness of life.*

Romans 6:4

- I. A Great Gospel—I Am Dead**
- II. Having Died and Risen**
- III. I Am in Christ**

The Significance of Baptism

Everyone who is already baptized needs to look back and consider the meaning of baptism. Even if you were baptized ten or twenty years ago, you still need to review this matter. We should always remember the verse which says, "Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" (Rom. 6:3). This verse is spoken in retrospect, not as a forethought.

The verses in Mark 16, Acts 2, Acts 22, and 1 Peter 3 are for those who have not yet been baptized, whereas the verses in Romans 6 and Colossians 2 are for those who have been baptized. They address those who have been baptized already. God is telling them, "Do you not know that when you were baptized, you died together with Christ and were buried and resurrected together with Him?"

Romans 6 emphasizes death and burial even though it also speaks of resurrection. Colossians 2 is more advanced; it emphasizes burial and resurrection, with resurrection as the focus. The emphasis of Romans 6 is death: "Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" The main point here is death. We should die together with Christ. Romans 6 is on death and burial, whereas Colossians 2 is on burial and resurrection.

The water of baptism typifies the tomb. Today, when we put a person into the water, it is as if we are burying him in the ground. When we raise him up from the water, it is equivalent to raising him up from the tomb. Before one can be buried, he must first be dead. You cannot bury a living person. If a person rises up again after he is buried, this is surely resurrection. The first part of this truth is found in Romans, and the second part of this truth is found in Colossians.

A Great Gospel—I Am Dead

When the Lord Jesus was crucified, He carried us along with Him to the cross; we were crucified there as well. In the eyes of God, He has terminated us. What do you think of yourself? You may say, "I am a terrible person to deal with!" Those who do not know themselves do not realize how impossible they are. A person who knows God and who knows himself will say, "I am an impossible person."

When we were heavy-laden with sin, we heard of the death of the Lord Jesus. This is the gospel. Then we saw that we were beyond all hope and that we were dead. This is also the gospel. Thank God, this is the gospel! The Lord's death has included all of us. We are dead in Christ. This is a great gospel! Just as the Lord's death is a great gospel, our own death is also a great gospel. Just as the Lord's death is a joyful matter, our own death is also a joyful matter. What should be the first thought that comes to our mind when we hear that our Lord has died? We should be like Joseph of Arimathea; we should bury Him. Similarly, when we hear that we are dead, the first thing that we should do is to bury ourselves, because burial is the first thing that follows death. Death is not the end. We are already dead in Christ; therefore, the first thing we need to do is bury ourselves.

Having Died and Risen

Brothers, when we step into the water of baptism or when we look back after being believers for many years, we must remember that we are already dead. We allowed others to bury us because we believed that we were already dead. If our heart is still beating and we are still breathing, we cannot be buried. In order to be buried, we must be dead.

When the Lord was crucified, we were crucified too. We allowed others to put us into the water because we believed that we had died. The Lord Jesus has resurrected; He

Verses

Romans 6:3-5

3 Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have grown together with [Him] in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be [in the] [likeness] of His resurrection,

Colossians 2:12

Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with [Him] through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead.

1 Corinthians 1:30

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

Ephesians 4:5

One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

1 Peter 3:21

Which [water,] as the antitype, also now saves you, [that is,] baptism, not a putting away of the filth of the flesh but the appeal of a good conscience unto God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

has put His resurrection power within us. Now we are regenerated through this power. This resurrection power operates within us and causes us to be resurrected. This is why we rose from the water. We are no longer our former self; we are now resurrected persons. Today, we must always remind ourselves of this matter. When we went into the water, we believed that we died and needed to be buried. When we came up from the water, we believed that we had newness of life. Now we are on the side of resurrection. Death is on the other side, but resurrection is on this side.

I Am in Christ

Once I saw a headline in the newspaper which read, "One Person, Three Lives." The article was about a pregnant woman who had been murdered. After the woman died, it became known that she was pregnant with twins. Hence, the headline read, "One Person, Three Lives." Please note that concerning the Lord, it is, "One Person, Millions of Lives." This is why the Bible repeatedly emphasizes the words in Christ. In the murder spoken of above, the murderer apparently killed only the mother; he did not kill the two children. However, because the two children were in their mother's womb, they died when their mother died. Likewise, since we are in Christ, when Christ died, we died in Him.

God has put us into Christ Jesus. This is the revelation in 1 Corinthians 1:30: "Of Him you

are in Christ Jesus." Since Christ has died, we are all dead. The basis for our co-death with Christ is our being in Christ. If we do not know what being in Christ means, we will not understand what dying with Him means either. How could the children die with their mother? They died because they were in their mother's womb. The analogy in the spiritual realm is even more real. God has joined us to Christ. When Christ died, we died also.

As soon as this gospel is preached to us, we should learn to look from God's viewpoint and acknowledge that we have died in the Lord. We have died because we believed this to be a fact. We have been buried in the water and have come out of it. We declare that we are on this side of the tomb. This is resurrection. Reckoning in Romans 6 involves both reckoning oneself dead in Christ Jesus and reckoning oneself alive in Him as well.

Brothers and sisters, I hope that you will take this way once you are saved. These are two separate thoughts. One thought comes before baptism, and the other comes after baptism. Before baptism we must see that we have already died and that we need to be buried. After baptism we must realize that we are in resurrection and that we can therefore serve God today.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
