



## THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

July 15, 2012

### “BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST’S DEATH”

#### **Sermon Text: Romans 6:3-11**

*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Dear Ones Baptized into Christ,

‘Baptized into Christ’s death’ ... Do we, who declare ourselves to be Christians, fully grasp with our spiritual hearts and minds what that means? Sadly the great majority of people of this world, including those who profess to be church-going Christians, either do not inwardly understand what this means, or they have already rejected this Baptism into Christ.

Yes, sadly today a great many who call themselves Christians, while publicly professing to believe in the forgiveness of sin and while practicing some outward form of baptism, hold onto a view of baptism contaminated by doctrinal error.

Some ‘go through the motions’ of baptizing; insisting upon and making a great spectacle of the man-made ordinance of completely submersing the individual being baptized in a special tank or some other large body of water, such as a lake or river. Indeed, some even use the words instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, yet when questioned about the efficacy of baptism, they deny the power of this most precious sacrament – this means of God’s merciful grace. They reject the Bible’s teaching that baptism – that which God declares is ‘*the washing of regeneration by the Holy Ghost*’ (Titus 3:5) - cleanses unregenerate man of sin’s guilty stain, frees us from the terrible punishment that is rightfully ours on account of our sins, and deliver us

from the insidious power of Sin and the Devil in our lives, so that we are quickened, enabled to live a new life in Christ Jesus, as new creatures sanctified to life in Him.

Others see baptism, whether by total immersion or simple sprinkling, as a meritorious good work – an act that serves to earn a person something towards their salvation – and a sign of one’s supposed ‘decision to accept Christ’. Relying on human logic, rather than on the Truth of God’s Word (*Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16*), they erroneously contend baptism is never to include infants and children. They insist baptism should only include those individuals who have attained what they sinfully call ‘*the age of accountability*’, as though anyone, at any age, who being yet unregenerate, and therefore as inanimate as a rotting corpse; being *dead in trespasses and sin* (Eph. 2:1), could do anything to merit their own salvation!

Ingrained with this evil mind-set, which is nothing less than an anti-Christian doctrine confusing the proper distinction and teaching of Law and Gospel and as such is devised by the Devil himself, they in fact reject the power of Almighty God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In doing so, despite the confession of their lips that they are Christians – ‘*of Christ*’ – they condemn themselves and their children to continued slavery to the Law of God, which has absolutely no power to save and this then only serves to further enslave and lead them down the path to eternal damnation.

But baptism is neither simply a matter of ‘going through the motions’, nor is it a good work performed by a person (*to any degree whatsoever*) that he might earn for himself redemption from sin, death, and the punishment of Hell.

From the Word of God today, let us be instructed by the Holy Spirit and come to the knowledge that Baptism into Christ is a *means* (or instrument) of God’s Grace to fallen men, offered freely to the whole world...

- I. to deliver us from the guilty stain and punishment of sin,
- II. to deliver us from the power of sin and death, and
- III. to create in us newness of life unto God.

{PRAYER:} Heavenly Father, sanctify us through Thy Truth, Thy Word *is* Truth. Amen.

Every one of us has the Law of God written in our hearts and we know from God’s Word that we cannot keep the Law perfectly as He demands. So corrupt is mankind by Sin, that any and all of his attempts to keep the whole Law (James 2:10) can naught but fall woefully short of meeting its every holy demand. As we read in Romans 3:23: “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...*” and in the tenth verse of the same chapter: “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...*”

These attempts of man to keep the Law and thus earn for himself a place in paradise then work nothing more than in the end they become nothing but further witnesses before God *against* the one performing them.

Dear Friends, Search your own hearts. Unless you so choose to deceive yourself, you know that you cannot satisfy every demand of God's Law. Nor can you even begin to placate the righteous wrath of a just and almighty God. We *all* deserve nothing but punishment and eternal death in the deepest pit of hell on account of our many sins. If you have not already fatally quieted your conscience, which testifies of the Law of God written in your heart, it will convict you of this truth. For the Bible says to each and every one of us: "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*" (I John 1:8) And in Isaiah 64:5-7: "*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*"

No, the Law can produce nothing good in any person. The Law only demands more and more from an unregenerate lost and condemned prisoner of sin, for there is absolutely no good – no righteousness – in him. The unregenerate serves sin with all that he thinks, says, and does; so that even those works which may *appear* to his fellow man as good and righteous, are in fact contaminated with the all-corrupting stench of sin and death. Hence, *it is not possible in the least* that He should lay hold of any righteousness based upon any of his works to offer up as a sacrifice for his sins, nor for the redemption of his soul, for all his works are as filthy rags on a rotting corpse.

Thus held under the power of sin and in bondage to the Law, we would be destined to serve sin here on earth and to suffer for an eternity the unspeakable tortures and unquenchable fires of Hell, *were it not for the Grace of God in Christ.*

But thanks be to God, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to suffer and die for all, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life! We read in Galatians 4:4,5: "*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*"

Yes, Jesus Christ, true God, humbled Himself, and taking on human form and human flesh, became true man, to come to this earth to do what man since the Fall of Adam into sin could not do; perfectly fulfill every demand of the Law of God for us and in our place.

Not only did He fulfill the Law perfectly for us by living a sinless life in the middle of such a lost and sinful world, but He bore in His body the whole weight of all the terrible guilt and sin of the whole world when He suffered and submitted Himself to be put to death at the hands of the very people He came to save. And this He did solely out of His divine love for us, for we indeed deserve not even the least of all His tender mercies. But He shed His gracious mercy upon us most abundantly to redeem us, to reconcile us, we who were mortal enemies of God. What great love He had for us! For through His obedience unto death upon that accursed tree, we are given the gift of the forgiveness of all our sins, life and salvation.

And so it is that through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the washing of water by the Word (Eph. 5:25-27), whereby and through which, God Himself imparts the forgiveness of sins, creates saving faith and performs the *washing of regeneration by the Holy Spirit* as a free gift to

man, who *by grace alone, through faith alone*, (Eph.2:8,9) is become the recipient of such a wonderful and undeserved gift of God.

And so all who are baptized in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are baptized into Christ's death. This means that being baptized into Christ, we die a spiritual death to sin. It means our sinful flesh – our Old Adam – has been crucified with Christ and we are freed from the bondage of sin; delivered from all the temporal and eternal punishment that was rightfully ours on account of our sin.

Solely by the working of faith in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we therefore grasp, lay hold of and rightly claim for ourselves the white robe of Christ's pure righteousness bought with the precious, innocent blood of Jesus Christ. And so clothed *by Grace Alone, through Faith Alone* in the full forgiveness of our sins by Christ Jesus, we have been washed clean from the stain of sin upon us and we stand justified before our Righteous and Almighty God in Christ.

First Corinthians 6:11 tells us: “...*but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*”

Being dead to sin through Christ's death then, no more are we held captive in slavery to Sin. No longer must we serve this earthly flesh with its evil lusts. Yes, Christ broke the stranglehold of Sin and vanquished Death once and for all, leaving in the grave all the humiliation and horrible guilt of the world's sin which He bore in His body. Likewise, through our baptism into Christ's death, through this most intimate and mysterious union with our Savior, we have *through Him* – we *share* with Him – that same victory over sin and death, so that now the Devil, the World, and our own sinful flesh shall have no more power over us! We are delivered from the power of Sin in our lives!

And that is not all. For just as we share in His death and His victory over sin and death, we can fully trust and steadfastly believe the Most Holy Word of God that declares we share also in His resurrection!

As we read in Ephesians 2:4-10: “*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*”

Yes, as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father on Easter Morning, we through our baptism into Christ's death, are raised up again by God's Holy Spirit to a new life – *as new creatures* – created for a life of joyous and thankful service to our neighbor and Christ's Bride, the Church, here on earth.

What is more, we are through our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, become joint-heirs with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the amazing glory of everlasting life in Heaven, which we shall fully receive and enjoy unencumbered by our sinful flesh when our gracious Lord calls us Home.

Therefore, My Dear Friends, having been received by holy baptism into Christ, you *know* that you are indeed delivered from the guilty stain, punishment of sin and you are delivered from the power of sin and death. Considering yourselves, then no more servants to Sin, but raised by the washing of the Holy Spirit by the Word to newness of life in Christ Jesus, let each of us daily with contrite heart in true repentance, confess all our sins and by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, daily put to death that old sinful nature which yet clings to our flesh. And in true humility and thankfulness for all that God has done for you in Christ, let us be busy with doing good to all men and in particular to all who are of the Household of Faith in Christ Jesus.

Moreover, spend time every day in communion with God, renewing your hearts and minds through His Word. For it is only through the instrument (means) of God's Grace in Word and Sacrament that we are enabled to live a life in all our conversation and in all we do truly sanctified to the glory of God.

Dear Friend, Having been *baptized into Christ's death*, let us live unto God through Christ!

To this end, dear Lord Jesus, bless us!

And now, may the Peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.