



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
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The Epistle of Romans

The Justification of the Ungodly

Chapter 6 Verses 1-11

In chapter six, we have several profound things occurring. For starters, Paul shifts from the metaphor of 'justification' to the metaphor of 'death and resurrection.' Keep in mind that we talk about the work of Christ on the cross in different ways. (i.e., justification brings forth the idea of a courtroom and being declared 'not guilty.')

Now in chapter six, Paul speaks with a different metaphor of 'death and resurrection' – that we have died with Christ and are now risen in him.

With that stated, how are we joined to Christ's death and resurrection? Christ died and rose from the grave in 32 A.D. – right! But how are we joined to this death and resurrection? The Apostle Paul tells us that the mode of Jesus connecting with us is sacramental – baptism.

Now, this way of Christ connecting with us is quite different than most Evangelicals believe. Many Evangelicals will see the Christian 'connected' to Jesus through mystical feelings. Remember that old hymn called, "I Serve A Risen Savior"? One of the lines in the hymn states, "You ask me how I know he lives, He lives

within my heart!" But how do we know that Jesus lives within our heart? Furthermore, don't we confess that Jesus has risen bodily? How does a 5'8" man fit inside one's heart?

You see, the Bible typically does not speak of Jesus being inside mankind – as if Jesus is stripped of His body and made a mystical ethereal thing that mysteriously floats into mankind's heart. Furthermore, when does the Bible speak of mankind's heart as a separate dimension – like an inner space that is separated from the rest of mankind body? We are not just a soul, but soul 'and' body.

You see, things are really the other way around. We are 'in' Christ. And not just our soul but our body too. Why? Because we are baptized to Jesus' death and resurrection. Our soul is not just baptized, but our whole being is baptized – body 'and' soul.

What does this mean? Well, we have been given the Holy Spirit through the Word and Baptism. He is with

us – shaping and modeling us. Furthermore, we abide with Christ by faith. And faith – it cements us to Jesus.

What this means is that Christ is Christ, and mankind is mankind. However, mankind is connected/joined/cemented to Christ and His death/resurrection through baptism.

How do we know Christ lives? The tomb is empty!

How do we know that Christ is with us, and we are with Christ? We are baptized!

There is one final aspect of this section of scripture. If we are connected to Christ's death and resurrection – we have died and are risen with Christ. Therefore, we have a change in Lordship! We do not belong to our sinful nature, the devil, and the world, for we are buried in Christ. We are dead to the sinful nature, the world, and the devil but alive to God.

What does this mean? It means that we are at war with our sinful nature, the world, and the devil, for they are no longer alive to us. They are not our lords. So, it is inconceivable for us to continue in sin that grace may abound. It is absolutely foolish to believe in a license to sin, for the Christian has died to sin and is alive to Christ.

So, when we do sin, what happens? Well, we will always sin until the day we die – even though sin is not our Lord. But when we do sin, we are to return back to reality – remember that we are baptized. You see, the problem is that we move away from our baptismal reality. We are prone to wander and are prone to leave the God that loves us. We are called to abide with the Lord – to stay put in our baptisms. However, like the Israelites of the Old Testament, we chase after other gods. We run back to our sin, like a dog returning to its own vomit. Thus, it makes sense why repentance is nothing more than beginning again – returning to our baptismal identity.



