

Newness of Life

Romans 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.

REVIEW

There is a negative side and there is a positive side to God's call to holiness. For example:

Negative: stop stealing.

Positive: work profitably with your hands.

Negative: no corrupt communication.

Positive: speak what is edifying.

Negative: be not drunk with wine.

Positive: be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In our text today:

Negative: stop sinning!

Positive: walk in newness of life!

Today we focus on that positive charge. We are called to walk in newness of life. As the theologian John Gill has put it, "We are raised from the graves of sin by the power of Christ, to 'walk in newness of life'; for since we are become *new* creatures, and have *new* hearts and *new* spirits given us, *new* principles of light, life, grace, and holiness implanted in us, and have entered into a *new* profession of religion, of which baptism is the badge and symbol, we ought to live a *new* life and conversation."

In the Greek the emphasis is on the newness. Hence we read, not "new *life*" but "*newness* of life."

You see, the picture of baptism points two ways: backwards to Christ's and our death and forward to Christ's and our resurrection unto life. The distinction between Christ's lowly life in the flesh on earth and His glorified life now in heaven indicates the stark difference that should mark our lives before and after salvation!!

So what jewels are there for us to discover in Romans 6:4? Here are 4 instructive principles:

Sequence – Direction – Empowerment – Expectation

I. SEQUENCE

A. Key word in Rom. 6:4: "that." It denotes a prerequisite. *This* must happen before the *other* can. Specifically, we must first die to the old life before we can move on to a new life.

1. We can tend to want to jump ahead to what we want without observing the intermediate steps that would get us there. We want to sit down and enjoy our bread, as it were, but first we must till, sow, weed, harvest, grind, mix, and bake.

2. Sequences are clearly very important to our Lord. See:

"Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; **first** be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. 5:24)

"But seek ye **first** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33)

"And the gospel must **first** be published among all nations." (Mark 13:10)

“Cast out **first** the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.” (Luke 6:42)

“For if there be **first** a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” (II Cor. 8:12)

“For Adam was **first** formed, then Eve.” (I Tim. 2:13)

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the **first** principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” (Heb. 5:12)

“We love him, because he **first** loved us.” (I John 4:19)

See also the Beatitudes (MT 5:3-11), II Pet. 1:2-10, maybe fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:21-22).

B. So here in our text today there is a sequence. Be dead and buried that you may be raised up. Trust me, a double-minded man trying to hold on to the old world and the new life shall receive *nothing* of the Lord. Don't go to step 2 before step 1. There are certain truths which must be engaged before one can move on to the next.

1. Here's God's counsel: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead *indeed* unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 6:11)
2. See the sentinel at the world's gates crying out to us, “Be ye dead, or be ye alive? Declare!”

II. DIRECTION

(“that like as Christ was **raised up** from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we...”)

A. Do you see the direction of God's work in His children?

“And God hath both **raised up** the Lord, and **will also raise up us** by his own power.” (I Cor. 6:14)

“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.” (Eph. 2:5-6)

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (II Cor. 3:18)

“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph. 4:22)

A. Oh, “the hope of his calling”! (Eph. 1:18)

1. See Hymn 291 – “Higher Ground.”

III. EMPOWERMENT

(“...that Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also” !!!!)

A. Clearly the glory being referred to here is the Father's glorious power.

1. See Eph. 1:19-20. So “power” is used interchangeably with “glory.”
2. Compare Col. 1:11, where Paul joins the two, praying that the church might be “strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.”

B. And surely the *glory* of God is the summation of all His power.

1. He has power to be everywhere at once, power to know everything at the same time, power to exist out of time and space, yes.
2. But also: He has power to do anything He wants with no need of resources of any sort.
3. See Isa. 45:5-7.

C. This truth about God's glorious power should fascinate us due to its:

1. Origin – It's like nothing else in human experience. Muscles have strength due to blood and tissue; engines require fuel and spark; electricity involves the flow of electrons; but God needs no such raw materials to produce power. He just says, “Let there be light, water, land, creatures,” and there they are!! So, the invisible things of God “from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” (Rom. 1:20)
2. Size – We are used to evaluating the relative power of things: lawnmowers, cars, tractors, generators, lightning, earthquakes, volcano eruptions.... But here is an entirely different kettle of fish, so to speak. Since God's power requires no raw materials, then it is *limitless*. Nothing is too great for Him. See Isa. 40:15-18, 25-26. See Ps. 62:11 – “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.”
3. Availability – Our text tells us that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us that we may live a new life. Did you hear that?!!! We do not have to be like the poor souls looking within themselves to muster up strength. Believers can access the same power from the same God who made the earth and raised Christ from the dead.

IV. EXPECTATION

A. Here the issue is not *our* expectation, but *God's*. Look again at our text:

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.

1. Really, this is the central message of the chapter.
 - a. Christ won a complete victory.
 - b. Nothing has the power to keep us from applying it.

c. God *expects* us to walk in newness of life. This is how we give witness that God *IS*.

d. What else? God sends His Son but does not expect we'll actually understand or employ the benefits and responsibilities?!!

B. Friends, God has provided and says we should experience newness of life: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:31-32)

So, what do you say? Are you willing to confirm your commitment to walk in newness of life? Will you pray a prayer of commitment to God's order of doing things, His design ever to move upward, His provision of power, and His expected end for your life?

DISCUSSION

1. Explain the biblical principle of sequence in your own words. Give examples of where you have seen this truth in the Scriptures and in your own life.
2. The hymn "Higher Ground" was quoted in the sermon. Does it represent *your* desire? During your time as a believer have you moved and do you want to move even more to higher ground? What does or would that look like?
3. Listed in the message were three aspects of God's power that should fascinate God's children. Name and discuss those aspects. Do you know this power? Why and how, or why not?
4. Explain in your own words this expectation of God's for you to "walk in newness of life."