

I. Introduction.

II. Your baptism symbolizes your justification -- reminding you that you are saved solely by God's grace through faith in the atoning death of Christ.

- A. In the first five chapters of Romans, Paul has expounded the good news of how men can be made right with God through God's grace in Christ. 1:16-17**
 - 1. Every one of us is a sinner. 1:18-3:20,23**
 - 2. Jesus Christ has met the requirements of God's law for His people. 3:25f 5:9,18ff**
 - 3. The salvation Jesus came to bring is received by faith alone. 3:21-28 4:5 5:1**

- B. Paul anticipates an objection. 6:1,15**
 - 1. Only a gospel of free grace would produce this objection! 6:1**
 - 2. If Paul had been preaching a message of faith plus works and ceremonies this charge would never have been made.**

- C. What does baptism have to do with salvation?**
 - 1. You have been saved because of Christ's work, not your own. 6:3-4 5:1**
 - 2. Just as Abraham was justified (declared righteous) by faith alone before he had received any ceremonial covenant sign, you are justified by faith alone. 4:9-12**
 - 3. Water baptism symbolizes your spiritual union/baptism by faith with Christ in His death and resurrection. 6:3-6 I Co. 10:2 Ga. 3:27 Col. 2:12**
 - 4. Your water baptism contributes nothing to justifying you before God. 5:1**
 - 5. It is possible to be saved without having received the outward symbol of baptism.**

III. Your baptism also symbolizes your ongoing sanctification -- reminding you that your union with Christ is the key to your growth in holiness.

- A. People still misunderstand God's grace. 6:1-2**
 - 1. The objection appears to be logical -- If salvation is by grace, apart from works, why bother to be holy? The more we sin, the more God's grace is displayed. v. 1**
 - 2. Beware of deductions which seem logical but are not supported by Scripture.**
 - 3. Paul is outraged at the suggestion that the gospel promotes sin. 6:2a,15**
 - 4. Paul replies that the gospel, rightly understood, promotes holiness! 6:2b-5**
 - 5. People today still draw this false conclusion from the gospel. Jude 1:4**
 - 6. God wants you to be holy. I Th. 4:3 Phil. 1:6 Titus 2:14**

- B. How should we pursue holiness?**
 - 1. The wrong approach can lead to frustration and failure.**
 - 2. Some focus upon the law, but the law alone won't produce holiness. v.14 5:20 8:3f**
 - 3. Others reject effort all together.**
 - 4. Many seek a quick fix through a formula or an experience.**

- C. The gospel is the key to your growth in holiness!**
 - 1. The gospel of grace produces holiness better than the law does!**
 - 2. The gospel is just as important for your sanctification as it was for justification.**
 - 3. Remember who you are! 6:11**
 - 4. Christianity begins in the indicative; not what we do, but what God has done provides the foundation for what we do. Col. 3:1ff I Jo. 3:1f 4:8-8**
 - 5. You can't go on sinning because you are united to Christ! 6:2b**
 - 6. Lack of growth in holiness is due to a failure to understand and apply the gospel.**

D. Because of Christ you are a new person!

1. Your old self has died in union with Christ. v. 2b-4a,6 Col. 2:12 Gal. 3:20
2. In what sense did you die to sin?

You died to sin in the same sense in which Jesus died to sin. v. 8-10 He. 7:27 9:12

3. You are a new person, united with Christ in His resurrection. v. 4b-5,8
4. You have been set free from slavery to sin. v. 6-7,9b,17,20-22 II Co. 5:17
5. This fact is true of every believer whether he realizes or feels it or not. I Co. 6:9ff
6. Your baptism pictures your union with Christ in His death and resurrection.

E. Now, live in light of who you are. v. 12-13 12:1ff

1. The fact that you are united with Christ in His death and resurrection does not mean that it is no longer possible for you to sin. 7:14ff Phil. 3:12
2. Nor does it mean that you no longer need to pursue holiness and fight sin. v. 12ff 12:1,6,9-10f,18,21 13:7ff,14 15:2-3
3. God expects you to exert effort to do His revealed will. Phil. 2:12-13 John 13:17
4. Put off sin. 6:12-13a
5. Put on righteousness. v. 13b,19c 12:1ff
6. Your triumph is assured in Christ. 6:14 Phil. 1:6 2:13 Titus 2:11-14 Jer. 31:33

F. How does this work out in practical terms?

1. What you believe about yourself influences how you live. I Co. 6:9ff
2. Daily preach the gospel to yourself -- remember who you are in Christ! II Co. 5:17
3. When you are tempted -- remember what Christ has done to set you free from slavery to sin.
4. When it is hard to love others -- remember God's grace to you. 15:2-3,7 Eph. 4:32
5. Step forward in faithful obedience, knowing that God is working in you.
6. When you fail, repent and remember the gospel yet again. I Jo. 1:8ff

IV. Conclusion: Remember your baptism.

A. Your union with Christ is portrayed by your baptism.

B. What does this text say about our practice of baptism?

1. What mode of baptism best portrays its meaning? Jo 3:23 Acts 8:38
2. Who should be baptized?
3. Paul assumes that every believer has been baptized. Mt. 28:19 Acts 2:37-38
4. Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but it is important.

Discussion questions

1. What is wrong with this statement: "Paul teaches in Romans 6:2ff that we are in the process of dying to sin"?
2. How does your baptism symbolize how God justified you?
3. How does your baptism point to how God is working to sanctify you?
4. What would you say to someone who objects to the gospel because it is unfair for God to save those who believe while rejecting others (who may be better people) who don't believe?
5. What is the role of the law in the process of sanctification?
6. How does the gospel help us in the process of sanctification?
7. What is the first command Paul gives in the book of Romans?
What is the significance of this command?
8. In light of the meaning of baptism, who should be baptized and by what mode? Why?
9. What should a Christian who feels defeated by sin do?
10. Why is it important to be baptized?