

"BREAKING THE BONDS OF LEGALISM--II"

{Romans 6:1-14}

Trinity Presbyterian Church

May 25, 2008

The theme of our text again this morning is that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not only historical facts and significant doctrines; *but, personal experiences of the Christian believer.*

In Romans 6, Paul is emphasizing that when one recognizes their position IN Christ [*the word "IN" is key*], and, as one who has been UNITED [*made one*] with Him—through His death and resurrection—then, it is inconceivable that we should go on living in sin!

In the first section of this passage, Paul asks four rapid-fire questions:

"[1] What shall we say, then? [2] Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin, [3] how can we live in it any longer? Or [4] don't you know that all of us who were baptized INTO Christ Jesus were baptized INTO His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a NEW life!" {6:1-4, NIV}

So then, we are now looking at two additional questions which Paul addresses step-by-step in the first fourteen verses—

1. What does it mean to have died to sin?
2. How and when did it happen?

Last Sunday I discussed our **BAPTISM INTO CHRIST**. We are not just people who are forgiven of our sins—but, **we have entered into a vital relationship with Jesus Christ**. We are **UNITED/MADE ONE** with Him. Paul writes of this in I Corinthians 6:17...

"Those who are united with the Lord is one with Him in Spirit!"

Jesus Christ is alive and well on Planet Earth today—IN you...and IN me!

Secondly, we discussed that our **BAPTISM INTO CHRIST IS A BAPTISM INTO HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION**.

"Don't you know that all of us who were baptized INTO Christ Jesus were baptized INTO His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism INTO death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection..." {6:3-5}

When we were **UNITED/MADE ONE** with Christ our sinful nature died and we were raised in newness of life. This is illustrated by the symbolism of baptism which represents both burial and resurrection.

Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of Galatians 2:19-20 is an excellent illustration of this...

"I identified myself completely with Christ. Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives IN me. The life you see me living is not 'mine,' but, it is lived by faith IN the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I am not going to go back on that!"

That brings us to the third step...

III. CHRIST'S DEATH WAS A DEATH TO SIN AND HIS RESURRECTION WAS A RESURRECTION TO GOD {vs. 6-11}

"For WE KNOW that OUR OLD SELF WAS CRUCIFIED with Him so that the body of sin might be considered POWERLESS, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because ANYONE WHO HAS DIED HAS BEEN FREED FROM SIN!

"Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that WE WILL ALSO LIVE with Him. For WE KNOW that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him. The death He died, HE DIED TO SIN ONCE FOR ALL, but THE LIFE HE LIVES, HE LIVES TO GOD!

"In the same way, COUNT YOURSELVES DEAD TO SIN but ALIVE TO GOD IN CHRIST JESUS!"

In that well known verse found in Romans 6:23 we read: *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Sin no longer has mastery over you and me! We have been set free! Dear friends, a slave who has been set free has no desire to go back into captivity. One who has *truly* been set free by Jesus Christ no longer desires to go back to what life was like before coming to know Him as Savior!

Paul gives three steps that take place...

- ❖ Our old self was crucified with Christ *{because of our identification with/IN Him.}*
- ❖ This resulted in our sinful nature being deprived of its power over us.
- ❖ *And*, this took place in order that we should no longer be enslaved to sin.

Baptism INTO CHRIST—INTO HIS DEATH—signifies that we are RAISED WITH HIM INTO NEW LIFE because the penalty for our sins has been paid once and for all!

Dear friends—we are dead people walking...our old selves *[life before Christ]* died...and now *[after Christ]* we have come alive!

IV. SINCE WE HAVE DIED TO SIN AND LIVE TO GOD WE MUST BELIEVE IT AND HAVE ASSURANCE OF THIS

This is no “let’s pretend” game...this is factual! Paul is saying here *“consider yourselves”* as if in fact you are indeed dead to sin and alive to God! This is the key to the entire passage, for once we realize that the old life is ended...the debt has been paid for our sin...then we will want nothing more to do with it!

John R. W. Stott writes that we should think of our lives as a biography being written in two volumes:

- ❖ VOLUME ONE is the story of our old life—before Christ
- ❖ VOLUME TWO is of the person who has been made new
- ❖ VOLUME ONE is my biography of my life that ended when I became a Christian—that person died
- ❖ VOLUME TWO is my biography that opened with my resurrection—a new person

We need to keep reminding ourselves who we are and whose we are!

I want to tell you a secret this morning—the secret for defeating the temptation of sin that happens constantly to each of us...it is in **KNOWING** that [vs. 6] **our old self was crucified with Christ**; and it is in knowing [vs. 3] that **baptism INTO Christ is baptism INTO His death and resurrection**. It is intellectually **KNOWING** [vs. 11] that **IN Christ we have died to sin and now live to God**. Dear friends, **we are to KNOW these things and meditate upon them...constantly!**

Listen, a person who has been made new—*given new life*—should no more think of going back to the old life than an adult to their childhood...a slave back into slavery!

OUR WHOLE STATUS HAS CHANGED! Our position has changed! We have been severed from our old life...and **IN Christ we are now totally committed to a new way!** We have died! We have risen! How can we live again in what we have died to?

V. WE ARE TO NO LONGER LET SIN CONTROL US

[vs. 12-14]

Again, I quote from Eugene Peterson’s “Message Bible”—

“That means you must not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. Don’t give it the time of day. Don’t even run little errands that are connected with the old way of life. Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full time—you’ve been raised from the dead—into God’s way of doing things. Sin can’t tell you how to live.”

After all, you're not living under that old tyranny any longer. You're living in the freedom of God!"

Christianity is not an emotional experience...it is a way of life. To chose to follow Christ is a lifetime commitment!

So, I conclude where I began...with those questions asked by Paul in the beginning of this passage...

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin, how can we live in it any longer?"