



HOLY CROSS CATHEDRAL

*This Bible study is designed as a follow-up to the sermon preached on Sunday, June 28th:
"A Bath, An Execution, and an Adoption."*

Read Romans 6:1-15.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. ¹⁵ What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

A Bath

1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The fact is that because of sin each of us needs to be "cleansed," cleaned up, have the stain of sin removed. What has God done to enable our sins to be removed? Where is his ultimate act of forgiveness and cleansing displayed?

One common concern raised in our tradition has to do with the fact that we (usually) do not use much water in baptism. It's not much of a bath(!) when we simply pour a little water over someone's head. How might 1 Peter 3:21 speak to this concern? (1 Peter 3:21: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.")

While it is easier to see the image of a spiritual bath when someone is dunked in a large amount of water, the spiritual reality is the same. In fact, all the way back to the first century (in a document known as the *Didache*) the church noted that the amount and even the temperature of the water impacted the symbolism, but it did not change the spiritual reality of God's work for us. Baptism is fully appropriate and valid regardless of how wet one gets!

An Execution

You'll notice that Romans 6 makes the point that we have been joined with Jesus in his death numerous times. What is Paul's application here about the fact that we have been "crucified with him" (verse 6) and "buried with him" (verse 4)? How does it say that we are now supposed to live in light of our death and resurrection with Jesus?

An Adoption

Verse 5 says we have been "united with [Jesus]." Romans 8 then states that all who have been united with Jesus are filled with the Holy Spirit, "by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" Through our union with Jesus, we can now rightly call God our Father. John 1:12 says, "[T]o all who did receive [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." That is, through faith and baptism, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and adopted into God's family. Take some time to think about and write down implications of being adopted by God. What results come from being God's child? Look especially at what you see in Romans 6:1-15, but you're also encouraged to think beyond just these verses.

Paul says, in light of our baptism (our bath, our execution and resurrection, and our adoption), "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body..." What areas in your life do you see that sin may still be reigning (or trying to get the throne back)? What steps could you take in that specific area to reaffirm and display your allegiance to Jesus and not to Sin? What would holiness and righteousness look like for you in that area?

Read Romans 6:1-15 again.

What is one significant take-away for you personally? How will you put this into practice this week, this month, this year?

Prayer

Take some time pondering each element of your baptism discussed this week: a bath, an execution, and an adoption. Thank God specifically for each of these aspects. Perhaps it might go something like this:

"Lord God, thank you that in baptism and faith you have given me a bath. Thank you for cleansing me from sin. Increase your grace in me that sin might not be so appealing to me..." Do the same with the other elements (execution and adoption).