

Romans 6:1-11—An Exegesis

“This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is worthy, not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with, the more precious it becomes.”

These are Martin Luther’s famous words in the preface of his commentary on Romans, words that are probably on our hearts and minds, to some extent, every time we read or study this book. As we delve into this small portion of Paul’s great epistle, let us marvel at the clear proclamation of Christ, and rejoice, as we do every time we study any part of God’s Word, at the marvelous work, which Christ has done for us.

Background:

Before we look into Romans 6:1-11, it is important that we look at its context. We never want to pluck a section of Scripture out of context and make it say, whatever we want it to say, as many false teachers love to do. A passage of Scripture is never written in a bubble. But, assuming that you are familiar with this book, I’ll keep this summary rather brief.

After his introduction to the book (Romans 1:1-17), Paul spends two and half chapters reminding us how sinful we all are, how we have all failed to achieve righteousness on our own (Romans 1:18-3:20). It doesn’t matter if you are Jew or Greek (or American), all have sinned. All are unrighteous. So God had to give us a righteousness apart from the law, a righteousness that was won by Christ (Romans 3:21-26), a righteousness that we can received only through faith in Christ (Romans 3:27-31). It doesn’t matter who you are or how great you are, only through faith in Christ can you be declared righteous before God. Even great Abraham was justified, not by his works but by faith alone (Romans 4). Therefore it is only by faith in Christ that we have peace with God (Romans 5:1-11). Christ, the second Adam had to come into the world to undo the sin of the first Adam by his perfect life and innocent death, winning forgiveness for all our sins and making us righteous (Romans 5:11-21). As Paul concludes this great section on justification, “Where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Romans 5:20).

Lest we think that we can just keep on sinning, living our lives according to the desires of our sinful flesh, because we have the forgiveness won by Christ in our back pocket, Paul makes it

abundantly clear that just isn't the case. After this glorious exposition on justification and its results (Romans 3:21-5:21), Paul spends the next three chapters expounding on how these glorious truths of justification sanctify us, by reminding us that, because we are justified through faith in Christ, we are dead to sin (chapter 6), dead to the law (chapter 7) and the dead to death (chapter 8). As we'll see in this study, our sanctification is completely a gift from God.

Romans 6:1

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ;

What, therefore, will we say? Should we persist in sinning, in order that grace may increase?

The word οὖν always looks back and draws a conclusion on what was previously said. Here it is no different. Paul is looking back into the previous chapter at the passage “Where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Romans 5:20) and drawing a conclusion from that passage, albeit a false conclusion so that he can prove a point. Two things show that this conclusion is a false conclusion. First, the tense of ἐροῦμεν is future, showing that this is what some people will or may say, but definitely not what Paul is saying or what he wants his listeners to say. Secondly, and even stronger, the mood of ἐπιμένωμεν is subjunctive, showing that this conclusion is a wish. It's deliberative. It isn't a fact.

Who of us hasn't heard this false conclusion in some form or another? Maybe it is the teen in Catechism class or the adult in adult catechesis, who asks in good faith, if Jesus forgives all our sins, freely out of his grace, then why do we have to do any good work? Or maybe it is the unbeliever, asking that same question in jest, trying to mock us Lutherans for claiming that we have no part in our Salvation, that forgiveness is a free gift of God. Or maybe (most often?) it is our own sinful flesh, who, from time to time, convinces us (and all believers) to commit that sin and indulge in that sinful pleasure because we know we can just ask for forgiveness afterwards. Regardless, this false conclusion, that we might as well keep sinning, in order to keep receiving the free forgiveness won by Christ, has been around since the days of St. Paul, is still around today and will probably be around until the end of the world. The devil will use any opportunity he can to attack the free gift of grace in any way he can.

Romans 6:2

μη γένοιτο. οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ;
May it never be. We, who died to sin, how will we still live in it?

If we still weren't convinced that sinning in order to receive free grace is a false conclusion, the Pauline phrase, μη γένοιτο makes it clear. γένοιτο is in the optative, making it the strongest wish possible. Paul uses this phrase throughout his epistles, as well as throughout this section of Romans (6:2, 6:15, 7:13) to answer his rhetorical questions with the strongest negation possible. Paul knows that a faith, which claims that we can continue to sin in order to continue to receive grace from God, is no real faith. It is a false faith, a damning faith that will lead to sinner to hell. Why? It's because anyone who has a true faith in Christ has died to sin and no longer lives in it.

Notice the indefinite relative pronoun, οἵτινες as opposed to the regular relative pronoun οἷ. This is used to show that the upcoming clause (dying to sin) applies to all people, who have faith in Christ, not just to one specific person. BDAG says that this indefinite relative pronoun makes the upcoming clause so certain that you can even translate it with a causal tense, "Since we have died to sin, how will we still live in it?" Thus it is impossible for a believer in Christ to continue to live in sin, under the excuse that they can just bank on God's free grace and free forgiveness. All believers in Christ have died to sin.

That is an important phrase to understand. What does it mean to ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ? Paul is going to spend the rest of this section (6:3-11) flushing out this thought of how we died to sin and what it means to die to sin. That is the main point of this section of Scripture.

Simply put? Dying to sin means that there is no relationship with us and sin any longer (2 Corinthians 5:17). It means that sin, which controlled us by nature, no longer reigns over us, who have faith in Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6:14). It means we are no longer slaves to sin but are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-4:7). The only way that we could receive these marvelous blessings, which were won by Christ for us on Calvary's cross, was if we, who are full of sin by nature, are first put to death.

The sin we have by nature is not merely a flesh wound. It's not merely a mild disease that can be controlled or conquered with the right state of mind. Sin is who we are by nature. It infects

everything we do, think and say. So the only way that we can be cured from this horrible disease of sin is if we are first killed. Dying to sin is the only way that sin can be removed from us.

Romans 6:3

ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν;
Or don't you know that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, into his death, were baptized?

This passage shows the when and how a believer died to sin. It wasn't by some great act that we died to sin. It wasn't because we were so motivated by a preacher that we somehow found the strength to throw off sin and do what God wants us to do. It wasn't because we loved God more than other people loved God and thus we were able to conquer sin. Rather we died to sin because we were baptized, because a little water, connected with God's Word, was thrown on our heads, because through that water and Word, we were united to Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Notice again the indefinite relative pronoun ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν instead of οἱ ἐβαπτίσθημεν. This indefinite relative pronoun shows how effective Baptism is. "As many as were baptized" or anyone, who is baptized, is immediately united with Christ, no questions asked. Baptism is effective in and of itself. It doesn't wait for a person to do something to receive the blessings of Baptism and make it effective. When that water, connected with the Word of God, is sprinkled on someone, whether infant or adult, that person immediately is united with Christ's death on Calvary's cross and therefore that person immediately dies to sin and no longer lives in it.

If, through Holy Baptism, you are united with Christ, (ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν), how can you not be dead to sin? How can you not be released from its powers? The whole reason that Christ came down into this world was to die on the cross and remove sin from his people (1 John 1:7, 2:2) washing them in the blood and water, which flowed from his pierced side. Since you are washed in the blood of Christ through the waters of Holy Baptism you know that you are united with Christ and thus you know that you have received that free forgiveness.

What a beautiful picture of Baptism this is, that Baptism unites you with Christ. Baptism is not just something that gave us a few blessings many years ago, so long ago, that many of us don't remember it. Baptism is something that gives us blessings every day of our life. Baptism is what unites us with Christ today. Baptism is what makes us dead to sin today. If we did not die

to sin through the waters of Baptism or if we were not united to Christ through the waters of Baptism, we would have no chance of being good and pleasing to our heavenly Father in any way. Sin would still be our master and infect everything we do. Since we did die to sin through the waters of Baptisms and since we are united with Christ, through the waters of Baptisms, we are good and pleasing in the eyes of our God. Sin is no longer our master but we are living in the full and free forgiveness, which Christ won for us by his death on Calvary's cross.

Romans 6:4

συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὡσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν
We were buried, therefore, with him through Baptism into death, in order that just as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, in the same way also, we, in a newness of life, walk.

As stated earlier οὖν always looks back and draws a conclusion on what has been previously said. Here it is no different. If we died with Christ, as the previous verse stated, then the next logical step would be for us to be συνετάφημεν or buried with Christ as well. Only our burial didn't take place at some garden tomb near Jerusalem. Rather our burial with Christ took place inside the font, where we were baptized.

What does it mean to be συνετάφημεν αὐτῷ? It means that the waters of Baptism covered you up. It means that the waters of Baptism drowned you. It means that the waters of Baptism became your tomb. Your death, through the waters of Baptism was a very real death. Baptism isn't just symbolic of death. The sprinkling of water on someone's head doesn't just picture sinful man being drowned. But when you were baptized, you really did die. You, sinful man, really were put to death. The waters of Baptism rushed over you, engulfed you and locked you up in them. They became your tomb.

Perhaps a picture from the Old Testament can expound on this more. Among the many pictures of Baptism throughout the Old Testament are the Flood and the crossing of the Red Sea. Notice that in both those stories¹, water drowned evil people and became their tomb. In the flood, God's

¹ Martin Luther shows how closely connected these two Old Testament stories are to Baptism in his great Flood Prayer, which is beneficial to say in any Baptismal liturgy. He writes, "Almighty and eternal God, according to Your eternal judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hardhearted Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, prefiguring this washing of Holy Baptism."

creation, which was so corrupt that “every inclination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil all the time” (Genesis 6:5) was drowned and put to death and buried (Genesis 7:21). In the Red Sea, Pharaoh and his army, who were God’s enemies and hostile to him, were drowned and put to death and buried (Exodus 14:28).

In the same way, you, who had a heart from childhood that was “only evil all the time” (Genesis 8:21) and you, who, by nature, were enemies of God and hostile to him (Romans 8:7, Ephesians 2:3), were drowned and put to death and buried in the waters of Baptism. You were so full of sin by nature that couldn’t be reformed. You had to be killed. So God drowned you and buried you in those Baptismal waters, so that you could be killed. Once you were dead, God could raise you to a new life, just like he raised his Son from death to life, so that you now “walk in newness of life.”

Notice in those two examples from the Old Testament, that water didn’t just kill but it also gave people a new life. In the Flood, Noah and his family were saved, freed from the influence of the sinful world. In the crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites were saved, freed from the bondage of the Egyptians. In the same way, you didn’t just die in the waters of Baptism, but you were also set free by them. You were freed from the curse of sin, living in the full and free forgiveness, which Christ won for you. Therefore you are ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν, meaning that you now abound in good works and are pleasing to God. Once your sinful flesh is dead and buried, once your rise to a new life, united with Christ, how could you not be pleasing to God? As Jesus, himself, said in Matthew 7:17-18, “Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”

But as we walk in this newness of life, abounding in good works, let us always be reminded that this too is a gift of God, given to us by solely his grace. These great things were all done διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς. We didn’t do any of these things on our own, in any way, but God did them all for us with his almighty power. He gets all the glory, not us. What could we do to please

Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood, and a lavish washing away of sin. We pray that You would behold_____. According to Your boundless mercy bless *him* with true faith by the Holy Spirit that through this saving flood all sin in *him* which has been inherited from Adam and which *he* himself has committed would be drowned and die. Grant that *he* be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, *he* would be declared worthy of eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

God on our own? We were so corrupt that we had to be killed. So, while we are the ones, who walk in newness of life, shown by περιπατήσωμεν being active, it's not by our power that we walk in this newness of life, shown by ἐβαπτίσθημεν and συνετάφημεν being in the passive. These things were done to us not by us. Glory goes to God alone.

Romans 6:5

εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα·

For since we have been one with the likeness of his death, certainly also we will be (one with the likeness) of his resurrection.

First off εἰ is not a conditional clause, meaning it isn't an "iffy" clause. But as Paul does many times throughout his letters, he uses εἰ as the marker of a causal clause. Paul has clearly set forth that we are united with the death of Christ through our Baptisms. There is no doubt about it. So Paul is using the εἰ to draw the next logical conclusion that since we were united with Christ in his death, through Baptism, then there is no doubt that we are united with Christ in his resurrection through Baptism, as well.

σύμφυτοι shows how closely connected we are with Christ's death and resurrection through our Baptisms. This is an interesting word. It's the only time this word is used in the Scriptures as a noun. It literally means "grow with" and comes to mean "be one with." You can see the συν root at the beginning of that word. In fact in verses 4-8 of Romans 6, there are six συν root words used, especially with all the verbs. All these συν words show one thing. We don't have the ability to die to sin on our own. We don't have the ability to walk in newness of life on our own. Rather the only way we can die to sin and walk in this newness of life is if we are "with" Christ, united with him in both his death and resurrection. As Jesus says in John 15:5 "Apart from me, you can do nothing."

So Baptism is both a death and resurrection. It is, as St. Cyril of Jerusalem, a 4th century bishop, exclaimed, "both your tomb and your womb." Not only are you put to death in the waters, but you arise out of those same waters to walk in newness of life. You literally rise from the dead to live a new life. You are so closely united with Christ, through your Baptisms, that you share the same experiences Christ did. (ὁμοιώματι literally means to be "in a state of having common experiences.") As he died, you died. As he was raised to life, you were raised to life. So if anyone asks you if you have ever seen a resurrection from the dead, you can answer that you

have. Every time someone is baptized, you witness a resurrection from the dead. The person being baptized dies to sin and rises to walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:6-7

τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ· 7 ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

Since, this, we know, that the our old man was crucified with (Christ), in order that ceases, the body of sin, so that we are no longer being enslaved to sin, for the one, dying, has been set free from sin.

Paul is further explaining verse 5 with these two verses, telling us exactly what happened when you became one with Christ's death and resurrection. Your παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος was crucified with Christ (συνεσταυρώθη—notice again the συν word). Your παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος, which is completely infected with sin, was put to death. Isn't it comforting that he is called παλαιὸς?

He is παλαιὸς in two respects. First he is called παλαιὸς because he was there first. You were conceived and born with a sinful flesh (Psalm 51:5). So he is older in time than your new man. Secondly, and maybe more importantly, he is called παλαιὸς because he is no longer in control of your life. It is the way you formerly acted, but not the way that you act now that you've been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone; the new has come."

Once again notice how Paul shows that all credit for you dying to sin and walking in newness of life goes to God alone. Both συνεσταυρώθη and καταργηθῇ are passive once again. You aren't doing the action with these words but action is being done to you. You weren't the one crucifying your old sinful flesh but God crucified it for you. You weren't the one getting rid of the body of sin so that it ceases to exist but God got rid of it for you.

In fact, Paul uses similar language in Galatians 2:20 to show the same point, that all credit for living a new life goes to God alone. He says, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Since God did these great things for you, when he baptized you, you know that you now live in newness of life. You know that you now are pleasing to God. Not only has the body of sin (your old man) been done away with. But on top of that, you are no longer a slave to sin. (Gen + the infinite is a result clause.) This will be true for you, for as long as you live. While almost all the verbs in this section of Scripture have been aorist, reminding you of what happened, when you were baptized, δουλεύειν is present, showing that this marvelous result of Baptism, that you are no longer enslaved by sin, will go on forever. It is who you now are. It will never end.

You have been δεδικαίωται of all sin, by being put to death through the waters of Baptism. I'm sure you recognize the root in the word. It's the one the Scriptures use for justification. Here it is used to remind us that we have been "set free" from the curse and the power of sin by dying with Christ at our Baptisms. That's why we are considered a saint in God's eyes.

Before we go on, we must mention an important point. Even though, our old sinful flesh is crucified with Christ, and drowned in the waters of Holy Baptism, it doesn't mean that we don't have to worry about battling him here on earth. Both Galatians 5:17 and Romans 7:14-25 make it clear that the battle on earth with our sinful flesh is a fierce battle. That's why we daily have to drown our sinful flesh in our Baptismal waters every day of our life, through contrition and repentance (4th part of Baptism). While the battle is tough here on earth, this section of Scripture (Romans 6:1-11) shows that the outcome of this battle has been decided. It was decided when you were baptized. When you were baptized, your sinful flesh was put to death, crucified with Christ. While you currently cling to that truth by faith, as you battle your sinful flesh day after day, one day, when you leave this sinful world, you will finally see that truth with your very own eyes. When you leave this world, you will see how dead your sinful flesh really is, as you live apart from your sinful flesh for all eternity in heaven.

Romans 6:8

εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ,
And since we died with Christ, we are believing that also we will live with him.

Once again, as in vs. 5, εἰ is not a conditional clause, an "iffy" clause. It is the marker of a causal clause. Paul has clearly stated that we died with Christ, when we were baptized. Our old man was put to death. He was crucified with Christ. There is no doubt about. The good news is that

the result of our old man dying with Christ through Baptism is that, through that same Baptism, our new man gets to live with Christ in the newness of life.

What does it mean that συζήσομεν αὐτῷ? Paul further explains this in the following two verses. Simply put? It doesn't just mean that we are going to enter heaven and live with our God forever, though that is the ultimate fulfillment and what we look forward to the most. We don't have to wait till we leave this world to live with Christ. We are living with Christ right now. He is living in us and we are living in him. As Paul pointed out in vs 5, through Baptism, we are σύμφυτοι (one with) Christ. Jesus' discourse on the vine and branches also makes that point abundantly clear (John 15:1-8). As long as we continue to live with Christ and be one with Christ by receiving Christ through the Means of Grace, we will walk in that newness of life and be pleasing to our Father heaven.

This is something that every believer in Christ will always believe. It's why all believers in Christ don't keep sinning so that grace may increase (6:1). All believers in Christ believe that they have died to sin and are living with Christ. That is shown by πιστεύομεν being both active and present.

Romans 6:9

εἰδότες ὅτι Χριστὸς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν οὐκέτι ἀποθνήσκει, θάνατος αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει.
Since we know that since Christ rose from the dead, no longer can he die, death is no longer a master of him.

Paul is now going to use the example of Christ's resurrection from the dead to prove to us how much comfort we can take in the fact that, through Holy Baptism, we are living with Christ (συζήσομεν αὐτῷ). The comfort comes from the phrase, θάνατος αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει.

When Christ rose from the dead on that first Easter morning, he conquered death. Death's powers were rendered useless against him. Death was no longer his master (θάνατος αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει). But as Paul says in the great resurrection chapter, "Death has been swallowed up in victory. (1 Corinthians 15:54b).

In the same way, since we died to sin and are living with Christ, having been united with Christ's death and resurrection through the waters of Holy Baptism, sin is no longer our master. Its powers are rendered useless against us. Just as Christ's resurrection proved that death had no

power over him, so also our resurrection to a new life with Christ proves that our old life of sin has no power over us. It proves that sin is no longer our master. Through Holy Baptism, we were freed from the power of sin and made righteous, allowing us to daily walk in that newness of life, living in the free and full forgiveness, which Christ won for us. In fact, that is the point that Paul will make in the second half of Romans 6.

Romans 6:10

ὁ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν, τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ ἀπέθανεν ἐφάπαξ· ὁ δὲ ζῆ, ζῆ τῷ θεῷ.

For (the death) which he died, to sin, he died once and for all; and (the life) which he lives, he lives to God.

First off, there is no doubt that there is an ellipsis in these verses. Both times ὁ is used, it is a relative pronoun with no antecedent in sight. So it is necessary to supply the antecedent (death for the first one, life for the second one) so that this verse makes sense.

Once that happens, you see a very clear contrast between Christ's death and his life after death. Notice how ἀπέθανεν is aorist. It is something that happened to him at one time in the past. In fact Paul even adds the adverb ἐφάπαξ (see also Hebrews 7:27 and 10:10) to show that his death was a one-time event. ζῆ, however, is present. It is something that is still happening today and will happen for all eternity. While Christ had to die to make a clean break from sin, it was only necessary for him to die once. Once he was raised to life, he would spend the rest of his eternity, alive, living to God, glorifying God in all he does.

It is the same with us, who have died and rose with Christ through the waters of Baptism. We only had to die to sin once. We only had to be crucified with Christ once. Even though we daily drown our sinful flesh through contrition and repentance, we don't rekill him every time we do this. We are drowning him in the same Baptismal waters, in which he was originally killed. Now that we are raised to a new life with Christ, through those same baptismal waters that killed us, we get to spend the rest of our lives, glorifying God with Christ, by living in his free and full forgiveness, by walking in that newness of life. It is what believers in Christ naturally do.

Romans 6:11

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς [εἶναι] νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

In the same way also, you consider yourselves (to be) dead, on the one had to sin, and alive, on the other hand, to God in Christ Jesus.

οὕτως concludes the point of all the συν words that were used throughout this section of Scripture. Just as Christ died and rose, so also we died and rose with Christ “in the same way” since we have been united with Christ’s death and resurrection through Holy Baptism.

Since we are united with Christ through Holy Baptism, we are pleasing to God. λογίζεσθε is the first imperative that is used in the entire book of Romans. Notice it isn’t telling you what to do or not to do so that you can be pleasing to God. Instead it is telling you, who have been baptized, how to view yourself or consider yourself. We, who are baptized, view ourselves or consider ourselves, as pleasing to God. Why? It’s because once you are baptized you are dead to sin and alive to God, as Paul has been saying throughout this entire section of Scripture.

That phrase (νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ) answers the question that Paul began this section with. Why can’t we keep on sinning so that grace may increase? It is because through Baptism we became dead to sin. Through Baptism, we were crucified with Christ. Through Baptism, our sinful flesh was done away with. So sin isn’t in control of our lives. Sin isn’t our master. Instead the believer in Christ is alive to God, living in the forgiveness, which Christ won for him. As long as we remain ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, and only if we remain ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, we will be pleasing to God, both here on earth, as well as for all eternity in heaven.

That’s important for us, pastors, to keep in mind. The people, to whom we are preaching, are dead to sin and alive to God, since they have been baptized into Christ. They have already been killed and brought back to life. So we aren’t Pietists, who use the Law to try to motivate people to be pleasing to God. Instead we are Lutherans, who use the Law to kill and the Gospel in Word and Sacrament to comfort, reminding them that, since they are ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, through the waters of Holy Baptism, they are pleasing to God and will be pleasing to God for all eternity.

Conclusion:

So, all credit for us being pleasing to God must go to God alone. All credit for us not willfully sinning so that we can receive the free forgiveness won by Christ must go to God alone. We are sanctified because we are justified. We are dead to sin and alive with Christ, because we were baptized into Christ. May all of us treasure our union with Christ. May all of us treasure our

death and resurrection on our baptismal day. This allows us to live in his forgiveness, to walk in newness of life, and to be pleasing to God for all eternity.

Soli Deo Gloria

Pastor Dan Frey

Joint Pastor's Conference of the Nebraska District

Good Shepherd, Kearney NE

October 16 and 17, 2012

Reading List

Deutschlander, Daniel M. "The Theology of the Cross" Northwestern Publishing House. Milwaukee WI. 2009

Gerhard, Johann, "A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and Lord's Supper" (1610) translated by Rev. Elmer Hohle. Repristination Press. Malone, TX 2000

Gerhard, Johann, "An Explanation of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ" translated by Rev. Elmer Hohle. Repristination Press. Malone, TX 1999.

Luther, Martin. "Commentary on Romans" translated by J. Theodore Mueller. Zondervan Publishing House. Grand Rapids MI 1954

Senkbeil, Harold L. "Dying to Live" Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis MO. 1994

Senkbeil, Harold L. "Sanctification" Northwestern Publishing House. Milwaukee WI. 1989.