

## **“Dying and Living in Christ”**

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This year, a few good friends of mine died. They were also my brothers and sisters in faith. So, I would like to find some comfort through reaffirming our identity in faith, love and hope. Due to coronavirus, Woongbin and Jaemin could not receive their baptism, and I'm sorry about that. Fortunately, Chanhyuck and Seonjin received their baptism. Hallelujah! As we are looking forward to Beomshik Song's ordination as an elder, I want to express my thanks to Reverend Ed. I pray for God's fresh anointments on Reverend Ed and for the mighty workings of the Holy Spirit in his new ministry.

Here are some expressions we are familiar with.

- we are baptized
- died on the cross
- are buried with Christ
- are freed from the power of sin
- Jesus nailed our passions and desires on the cross

Though we know these expressions by heart, what do they truly mean to us?

### **Christians' partaking in the death and resurrection of Christ, what does it mean to you?**

In Romans 5, Paul proclaimed that the authority of sin has been broken and now grace reigns. We Christians are dead towards sin and sin shall not be our master because we are not under law but under grace.

Paul's point is this. The power of sin cannot match with the power of grace. God's grace is culminated in the death and resurrection of Christ. Through receiving this grace of God with faith, we partake in the death and resurrection of Christ. "Christ died for all, and therefore all died. And since Christ is alive, all are alive." "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in us, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in us."

My topic today is not about baptism. But I need to talk about baptism as an answer to the question I raised previously. Through baptism, we enjoy the death of Christ, being united with Him in the likeness of His death. In that sense, being baptised can be phrased as "dressed in Christ". Through baptism one transfers from one dominion,

Adam's world under the rule of law, sin, and death, to another dominion under the rule of Christ and grace. Believers only would receive this baptism sharing what Paul says. "I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."

The death of Christ is the way God tackled and triumphed over Sin. The power of God is actualized through the event of Christ's death. "For the death that Jesus died, he died to sin once for all." Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. The power of death has been broken.

Anyone who believes in Christ is not under the reign of death either, for he who has died is freed from sin. The old man who used to be a slave to sin is now dead being nailed on the cross with Christ. This doesn't mean that we are free from the temptation and desire to commit sin. It means that the power of sin does not have its authority over us.

Believers now have hope of resurrection in Christ through baptism, "as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." Resurrection is an event that will be realized in the future. However, we have already received this new life, walking in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, acting with love and faith, behaving properly as in the day, leading a life in ways that please God as we mature into a holy and spiritual life. We have transferred to living in obedience to God, no longer operating under the law of sin and death.

Participating in the death and resurrection of Christ requires our will. Many people are confused and think that being united to Christ means our identity is dissolved in Christ. Being in Christ means belonging to Christ. Belonging to Christ means being alive to God. We need to remember our creator. No man can generate nor sustain his own life. Everyone belongs to God.

"You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?" Anyone who tries to be righteous by observing the law will be cut off from Christ. Paul's point here is this. Who belongs to Christ? The one who lives by faith in Christ. Only by being in Christ one can enjoy the life of Christ. Paul emphasizes the word "belonging" since our destination will be decided by whom we submit ourselves. Sin leads us to death, but righteousness leads us to life. Christ was delivered over to death for our transgressions and was raised for our justification.

Through baptism we are not only dead in Christ, but also resurrected in Christ. We now have this hope of resurrection even when we die. "We shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." "We believe that we shall also live with Him." Through baptism, we join the community of all Saints as receiving an assured promise of being a co-heir with Christ and sharing in His glory. We are the first fruits who participate in the first resurrection, and over whom the second death no longer has authority. We will live with Christ for a thousand years as kings and priests. Baptism is the beginning.

Paul sees the miserable conditions and innumerable powers that men are enslaved under. And he believes that only the supernatural power of God can set men free. The power that redeems, reconciles and justifies men has been working in human history through the death and resurrection of Christ. And this salvific work of God continues through the Holy Spirit now. Our salvation cannot and will not work through any human effort. The supernatural work of God is the grace of God. It came to us only through the love of God. The Son of God, the Lord of glory himself entered the world of sin and death, and obeyed God to the point of death. By being raised from the dead, Jesus testifies to everyone that all are to submit to God. The death and resurrection of Christ is the very event that demonstrates the love and power of God.

Anyone who acknowledges and believes why Jesus died and was resurrected will be freed from their slavery to sin. Believers are not under the power of sin. Praise God! We are under the grace of God. God pours His renewing power over those who believe in His Son and commit their lives to Him, who recognize His love shown through the death and resurrection of His son.

Christ's death and resurrection are God's reconciliation work that brings life to those who believe in them. The death and resurrection of Christ testify to the reality that God has the ultimate authority over all life and death. The cross is the place where the love of God was manifest and where His redemptive plan for men was accomplished.

"He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

It is not sin that died with Christ, but sinners who died with Christ. "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." Hallelujah!

Let us pray:

Father God, thank you for giving us your Son. Thank you for sending your promised Holy Spirit. Thank you for having us be part of the body of Christ. We are living in Your Spirit who is living in us, touching us, moving us, keeping us in your peace, and making us known to You. So we will strive to please you. We know that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. In the Holy Spirit, we will live the life of love, faith and holiness. I pray this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the risen God of the living, our King. Amen