

Romans #14
Christian Baptism
Romans 6:18

You will remember in our last study we talked about the fact that "in Adam" sin and death reigns, but "in Christ" grace and life reigns, as seen in verses 12 and 20, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned... Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more."

Having heard Paul's teaching, in their confusion, some of his listeners drew this conclusion: "If where sin was because of Adam, and where grace was because of Christ, then why not sin more in order to obtain more grace?"

Now Paul's answer was one of almost astonishment, as seen in 6:15-16 "Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" It is here that Paul gets right to the matter, as seen in verse 5, "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection." **And it is in this section that Paul deals with the subject of Christian baptism. In doing so, he deals with both *Spirit baptism* and *water baptism*.** And he makes it very clear that both involve believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 3 he says, "Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" Now we need to be careful as we study this passage of Scripture, because Paul is speaking, first of all, concerning the *baptism of the Holy Spirit* that takes place at the point of salvation.

Although there seems to be much confusion concerning this matter of *Spirit baptism*, I am convinced that it did not come from the Word of God. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul gives us this insight, "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Spirit baptism established our relationship with the Savior, as seen in Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." **In this one transaction, the Holy Spirit places us in the Body of Christ, the living church.** Not brick or mortar, for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the body of people who have been born again. **The church is comprised of every believer and is a living entity.**

That union with Christ's universal mystical Body, the church, is accomplished by the supernatural, baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, the moment we receive Jesus Christ as our personal Savior.

Look at verse 4, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Here Paul is speaking concerning water baptism as a symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Although water baptism does not save you, it is indeed the first step of obedience in your Christian life. Therefore, baptism is not some optional ritual, to be delayed or postponed. **Baptism is an outward expression, to an unbelieving world, that we have been born again, dead to the world, and raised to walk in the "newness of life."**

But baptism also signifies your inclusion in God's family. It publicly announces to the world, "I am not ashamed to be a part of God's family, by being, baptized."

Look at what we have been told in Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." **When I first started preaching I really did not know very much about the Bible, and shortly thereafter I enrolled in Florida Baptist College Graceville, Florida.** And, in my New Testament Class, when we got to this passage of Scripture, I wondered why Jesus' Great Commission gives the same prominence to baptism as it did to the great tasks of evangelism and edification. Because it was a New Testament Survey class, and wasn't really dealt with, I just let it pass. But through the years I have come to understand a little more concerning biblical truth, and I understand a little more about baptism.

Why is baptism so important? Because it symbolizes one of the purposes of your life: incorporation into the fellowship of God's eternal family. **It is also true baptism declares your faith, and it is true baptism is an outward sign that we share in Christ's death, burial and resurrection, but it is also a celebration of your inclusion into God's family.**

Therefore, water baptism is a physical picture of a spiritual truth. It represents what happened the moment God brought you into His family. Remember, we said earlier, baptism does not make you a member of God's family: only faith in Christ does that. Baptism shows that you are a part of God family.

Look at verses 5-6, "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." It is clear that both *Spirit* baptism and *water* baptism both speak of the fact that we have *identified with Christ in death*, as seen in 2 Corinthians 4:10-11, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." We are further told in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me." **The Bible is simply teaching us that the split second we believe on the Lord Jesus and accept His finished work, we share in all that He did for us through His life, His suffering, His death, His burial, and His resurrection.** Therefore, in its truest sense, *Christian living is Christ living in and through the believer!* And that is why Paul reminded us in I Corinthians 6:19, "What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"

The Bible teaches us that Jesus suffered, died and rose again so that He could give birth to a new race of reborn men and women who would be equipped to carry on the ministry He had begun. Listen to what He said in John 14:12, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." In other words, Jesus laid down His life so that He could raise up a race of believers who would walk this earth, not only doing the same works that He Himself did, but even greater works.

The very thought of doing the works of Jesus staggers the minds of most Christians today. And because they can't see how such a thing could be possible. No doubt, the first disciples must have felt the same way. Especially after the crucifixion when they scattered and ran in fear, they must have wondered what Jesus could possibly have meant when He said to them, "It is expedient for you that I go away." **Expedient?** Up to that point, it had been a disaster!

Then everything changed. Jesus rose from the dead. He met with the disciples and instructed them to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. Then in Acts 1:5 and 8 He said something that must have thrilled them to the very core, "John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now... (and) you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Look at what we have been told in I John 2:27, "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him." The Greek word translated "abide" means "to remain continually."

The "anointing" is the power of the Holy Spirit, and we have already been told that we are "the temple of the Holy Spirit." That is why John reminds us "the anointing which you have received of him abides in you..." **Therefore, every child of God has the "anointing" abiding in him/her.** That means that every child of God has the same spiritual potential, the same spiritual ability (not the same spiritual gifts, nor the same physical ability).

Because of the *indwelling presence* of the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1: 13-14 tells us that He has become the "seal" of our salvation, "In whom you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

This "seal" is a mark of identification. This mark denotes ownership and therefore protection. The "seal" He has placed on us attests, certifies, and acknowledges that we belong to God. Even when standing in a crowd of people, the child of God carries the Father's mark of holy distinction.

The seal of the Holy Spirit is God's holy and solemn pledge that He will redeem us completely from everything that torments us and causes us concern past, present, and future. The Holy Spirit is God's legal claim and His valid contract signifying that He is the author and finisher of our faith and will bring us into glory with Him. The work of the Holy Spirit is God's investment in our future. He is our empowering, our energizer and encourager who assures us that we are going to make it.

In other words, salvation is not a matter of striving; it is a matter of commitment. Living the Christian life is when we stop spending our life *trying* and start living our life *trusting*.