

# AHEAD TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH

Thomas Robinson, *He Goes Ahead of Us 5*, May 25, 2014

## ROMANS 6:1-14

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Are we to **continue in sin** that **grace** may abound?

<sup>2</sup> By no means! How can **we who died to sin** still live in it?

<sup>3</sup> Do you not **know** that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into his death**? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore **buried 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**.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> **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**. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin.

<sup>8</sup> Now **if we have died with Christ**, we **believe** that we will also **live with him**. <sup>9</sup> **We know** that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; **death no longer has dominion** over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

<sup>11</sup> So you also must **consider yourselves dead to sin** and **alive to God in Christ Jesus**.

<sup>12</sup> Let not **sin** therefore **reign** in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup> 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**.

<sup>14</sup> For **sin will have no dominion over you**, since you are not under law but under **grace**.

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## JOHN 3:5-7 JESUS SPEAKING TO NICODEMUS

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is **born of the Spirit** is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be **born from above**.'"

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For **in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body** – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 3:17-18

<sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

## GALATIANS 2:20

<sup>20</sup> I have been **crucified with Christ**. It is no longer I who live, but **Christ who lives in me**. And the life I now live in flesh I **live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me**.

## GALATIANS 3:26-28

<sup>26</sup> For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> For **as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ**. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

## PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21

<sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will **transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body**, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

## What Do You Know?

In Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the great narratives of Israel and all creation come into focus. Israel's story of deliverance, rebellion, and exile, focused into a suffering Messiah. The whole creation, good, but corrupted, alienated from the creator, awaiting renewal. But what does that mean to a person in Rome or in New York? In Romans, Paul shows that we all are caught in the corruption of sin – life misdirected to false desires, powers, gods. The gospel is that Jesus embodies God's grace intervening to set us free from that slavery. To give us new life, life set right, new hope, power to overcome all that destroys life. Here Paul challenges believers to focus on what they know (Rom 6:2,6,8-9). What Jesus' story shows them about reality and themselves. On the basis of that they consider themselves in a new light (6:11). This is not just a new imagination, but realizing that God has worked in Jesus to change the reality of my life, to bring new possibility and power.

## Baptism – Jesus' Life Meets My Life

Paul focuses on baptism – a physical action, a plunge in water that is also “into Christ Jesus.” Jesus was not just new ideas but real life, teaching, death, physical resurrection – united. So also our connection with Jesus is on every level – physical body, ideas, will, action, all. Baptism is our action, an expression of faith, but also an action that only God can do, uniting us with all that God was doing in Jesus both in death and resurrection.

His death becomes ours. Plunged into his death, Co-buried, united in likeness, co-crucified. The body of sin made powerless. We died with him. God does this! We realize it. All that Jesus' death embodied now becomes part of us: Self-giving Love. Faithfulness. Willing to serve and suffer for others. Forgiveness. A diverse body building up each other.

His resurrection becomes ours. The glory of the Father. Walking in newness of life. No longer enslaved to sin. Death has no dominion. Living in a new realm – alive to God. Life without guilt and condemnation. Life with meaning and hope. Again, God does this! We get to experience it in our lives as we know it and consider our life in the light of God's work.

Something as simple as baptism has great depth when God is at work. We may approach it with only a beginning faith, but we are inviting the God of the universe to be our God. He gives us a resurrection/new birth from above that we can barely begin to understand, but that we experience and grow into as his Spirit works in our lives, mind and body.

## The Unfolding Resurrection

The resurrection that is given with baptism is both present and future. It is the promise of sharing in the transformation of all creation when the last enemy, death, is destroyed. Only Jesus has reached this conquest over death, raised in a glorious imperishable body never to die again. That conquest of death makes his human death so full of power. But resurrection also begins now. We rise to walk in newness of life. We realize that we are in fact in Jesus dead to sin and alive to God and we start learning to live that way. The re-creation starts from the inside out. We learn by being united with the cross, learning to see things by a standard different from the world, to love, give, forgive. We learn that we can live free from the sins that destroy us. We learn to give our selves for justice, good, service, beauty. We learn to live in and give God's love and grace.