

Immersed into Christ

Romans 6:1-5

April 19, 2015

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^A Matthew 28:19-20; John 4:1-3; Acts 8:36

^B 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Titus 3:5; Romans 8:16; John 15:4-5

^C Romans 5:1-2, 17, 21

^D 1 Corinthians 12:13

^E Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 12:14

^F 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13, 4:30

^G Romans 4:25

^H Philippians 3:10

A. A Message Illustration

1. What Did That Story Illustrate?

- a. public speakers often begin their speech with a joke
- b. preachers may start their message with an extremely moving and captivating story
- c. then as the speech or message continues, you spend some time wondering what that introduction had to do with what followed
- d. but that is certainly not the case in the illustration that is used in this sixth chapter of the book of Romans
- e. in the passage before us this morning, Paul uses 'baptism' as a figure of speech, as an illustration, to support the truth he is teaching
- f. so to properly understand that truth, we need to do two things
 - (A) first, recognise how baptism was performed in the NT church so that we can see the illustrative force of this act
 - (B) second, determine what is the spiritual reality which is portrayed by the act of baptism
- g. then we shall see – and I hope in a real personal way – how our union with Jesus Christ as our Saviour relates to our problem of sin

2. Baptism, the Illustration

- a. Jesus, in parting from the world, gave to us this commission: "19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)
 - (A) thus He left to us this ordinance – something ordered – of baptism
 - (B) this order was not given in a vacuum – baptism was an existing practice with which the disciples were familiar
 - (C) as we have mentioned before, in NT times the Jews used baptism to bring proselytes into the practices of Judaism; this "washing" was to remove from these converts the stain of being Gentiles
 - (D) John the Baptist preached to the Jews a baptism of repentance, whereby they confessed that though they were God's people, they were living no better than pagans
 - (E) some, if not all of His disciples had been baptised by John, as well, "1 Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee." (John

4:1-3)

- b. the word baptise is really a Greek word and it is literally "to dip, to plunge, to immerse" – it and its root word were used to describe the process of dyeing fabric, and, in a common but gruesome use, it described the sinking of a ship at sea, an association with death
 - (A) so that baptism, the illustration and the ordinance, involved the use of water – taking place at the river or at standing water – after receiving the gospel from Philip, the Ethiopian asked, 'As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"' (Acts 8:36)
 - (B) baptism in the NT was not just water poured or sprinkled on a person as an symbol of cleansing
 - (C) but an actual immersion into the water – an aspect which Paul uses here as illustrating death – and then emerging from it
- c. but, it seems very early in church history, the words of Jesus were reversed as if he had said, "Go therefore and baptizing all nations, making them disciples in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,"
 - (A) one writer comments that the early church "fathers speak of the baptized person as truly born again in the water. They supposed him to go into th water with all his sins upon him and to come out of it without them. ... It appears to the impatience of man too tedious and ineffectual a way to wait on God's method of converting sinners by His Holy Spirit through the truth, and therefore they have effected this more extensively by the performance of external rites." –{2}.
 - (B) thus, they mistook the figure for the reality
 - (C) confusing what illustrates the gospel, for the gospel itself
 - (D) many sects today perpetuate that error, ascribing to baptism by immersion in water a power which it does not have
 - (E) they do this by using proof texts, failing to realize that these do not refer to water baptism, but instead to the reality behind it ...

3. Baptism, the Reality

- a. there is a baptism that saves, a baptism that empowers, but it is not the mere going down into the water and coming out
- b. it is the baptism by the Holy Spirit – to see what this means, let us turn to 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 – "12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many."

- c. it is by the Holy Spirit that we are baptised – immersed, plunged, put right inside – the body of Christ.
 - (A) if you have been saved, then you have been baptised by the Holy Spirit of God and you have become a member of Christ’s church
 - (B) there is no waiting period, there are no baptismal classes, there is no vote by the elders or church congregation – it is done
- d. that Holy Spirit baptism initiates all the blessings of salvation
 - (A) imparting spiritual gifts whereby the Holy Spirit equips the church
 - (1) in the NT times, one of those was particularly the ability to speak in foreign dialects so that the gospel be proclaimed
 - (2) if you examine the Scriptures, particularly, but not limited to Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12-14, you will discover that what distinguished Christians’ speaking in tongues from the pagan ecstatic utterances, was that they had meaning, that they could and should be interpreted by the speaker or others
 - (B) the cleansing from our sin: “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,” (Titus 3:5)
 - (C) the realisation of God’s love: “and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:5)
 - (D) our adoption as God’s children: “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,” (Romans 8:16)
 - (E) and many more to numerous to cover this morning
- e. baptism by water, then, is simply
 - (A) an external act confessing what is already a reality in our lives, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - (B) and a means by which our fellowship in the universal church of Christ is recognised in entering the fellowship in the local church
 - (C) this then, is important, because it is an order from Jesus Christ
 - (D) one which every believer should obey
- f. but Paul has a deeper truth to convey
 - (A) of which baptism is but an illustration
 - (B) it is an exposition, in fact, on the words of Jesus Christ: “4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)
 - (C) namely, that it is our union with Jesus Christ that enables us to depart from a sinful life to one that serves

our God

B. The Sin Problem Romans 6:1-2

1. Context of Romans 5

- a. after 3 chapters in describing man's helpless and hopeless state in sin, Paul gives God's solution: justification by faith
 - (A) by this God deals with us just as if we had never sinned
 - (B) Romans 5:1-2 – "1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God."
 - (C) Romans 5:17 – "For if by the transgression of the one (i.e., Adam), death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17)
 - (D) Romans 5:21 – "so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:21)
- b. so, as the Bible often repeats, salvation is the result of God's grace, and has no dependency upon man's works
- c. that being so, there comes the question or objection

2. Then Why Not Sin?

- a. "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" (Romans 6:1)
 - (A) if God is glorified in the grace He shows to us as sinners, in the salvation that He has provided in Jesus Christ
 - (B) by forgiving more, would He not be then glorified even more?
 - (C) Paul's answer comes with thunder:
- b. "May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:2)
 - (A) the fundamental answer is that for the Christian there was a time when he or she died to sin
 - (B) if we are to realize the implications of that statement in our lives then we need to absorb into our being a number of truths
 - (1) one: sin is a revolt against God – it is incompatible with those
 - (a) who have God Himself dwelling within them
 - (b) those whom the Holy Spirit has made God's children
 - (2) two: justification took place, once for all; our status before God has been forever changed: accepted

in the Beloved

(3) three: sanctification, being transformed into the image of Christ, began at conversion and is a life-long process by God

(C) these three all give a resounding "NO!" to the question asked – "shall we continue in sin?"

(1) with justification by faith, we then died to sin

(2) with sanctification, we realise we are in a life-long battle

(3) and, if anyone should doubt the latter, then read Romans 7 where Paul describes that battle in his own experience

C. Baptism Portrays Union with Christ Romans 6:3–5

1. Immersed into Christ (6:3)

a. "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3)

b. first note the little word "all" – this is the universal experience of all believers without exception

(A) that "who have been baptized" – immersed – "into Christ" is not an additional condition or achievement by a privileged few; it is another way of saying what 1 Corinthians 12:13 says: 'For by one Spirit we were all baptized' – immersed – "into one body."

(B) the Greek "baptizo" – immersed – brings out very pointedly how complete and deep is that union which has been effected by the Holy Spirit between us and our Lord Jesus Christ

c. the first aspect of that union was brought into effect by His death

(A) our acceptance by faith of His death in the place of our death

(B) His bearing our punishment for our sins

(C) His identification as the Son of Man with us and our sin; our identifying with Him by confessing Him as our Lord and Saviour

(D) was the Holy Spirit baptizing us into His death

(E) when Christ died, in God's view, I died

(F) when Christ was punished, in God's view, I was punished

2. For the Here and Now (6:4)

a. "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

(A) and when Christ rose from the dead, then we, who were dead in my trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1),

were made alive

- (B) being in union with Him through faith, as well as sharing in His death, we shared in His resurrection
 - (C) for you and I who trust in Christ, the resurrection of Christ is not some dim and distant historic event: it is the basis of our life today
- b. the cross, the tomb, and the resurrection
- (A) are all part of our union with Christ, being immersed into Christ
 - (B) when we go through the waters of baptism we are but giving a pictorial display of that spiritual journey; once dead, now alive
 - (C) we now, therefore, are able to walk in newness of life, something utterly impossible while we were dead in trespasses and sins
 - (D) "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." (Colossians 3:1) – an encouragement to our sanctification
 - (E) "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14)

3. For the Hereafter (6:5)

- a. "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection," (Romans 6:5)
- b. there is a spiritual resurrection – a newness of life – which we enjoy now – both in union with Christ and in fellowship with God
- c. but among the benefits of the baptism of the Holy Spirit which is conveyed at conversion is the "earnest, down payment, pledge" of the resident Holy Spirit – "who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge." (2 Corinthians 1:22) – we have been sealed
 - (A) "... in Him (Christ) with the Holy Spirit of promise" – Ephesians 1:13
 - (B) "... for the day of redemption" – Ephesians 4:30
 - (C) all of which means is that our union with Christ cannot ever be broken – it will last through all this life into the next – our home in heaven is thus assured
- d. and if this be the case, how can we then deliberately continue in sin, persist in a revolt against God? The answer is, we cannot.
- e. Romans 6:6-14 is written to assure of this fact
 - (A) being immersed in Christ bring conversion, verses 6 to 11
 - (B) being immersed in Christ brings emancipation, verse 12-14

- (C) that those whom God justifies, He will sanctify
- f. to this truth of sanctification we shall, Lord willing, return another day

D. Conclusion

1. Justification

- a. this is a gracious work of God, put into effect by Christ Jesus' death on the cross and His rising again from the dead
- b. "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." (Romans 4:25)
- c. it is appropriated – taken hold of, possessed and made one's own – by faith in Christ, in His finished work, in God's promises

2. Union with Christ

- a. is an already present reality for every believer
- b. by the very nature of salvation, it cannot be otherwise
- c. appropriate it by faith, as Paul did: "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;" (Philippians 3:10)

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NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh
BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan
EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton
Geneva-- Geneva Series of Commentaries – *Romans* – Robert Haldane
Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.
Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
TYN – *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*

2. Geneva, Robert Haldane, *in loc. Romans 6:3* – page 245.