

DYING WITH CHRIST

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” —ROMANS 6:3

In Chapter 5 of the book of Romans, Paul talks about Christ dying for us, but in Chapter 6, he talks about, “I died with Christ”. To understand what it means to “die with Christ”, we first have to understand what Christ having died for us means.

There are two attributes in the character of God that makes the cross of Jesus necessary; first, God is just and second, God is merciful. Jesus Christ, absolutely sinless with nothing to be atoned for, stood in our place and, on the cross, addressed and satisfied the wrath of a just God. By believing in Him, we are the recipients of mercy and are forgiven. But God does not let us off the hook because He is merciful. We wouldn’t need the cross if He exercised that prerogative. We are forgiven on the basis of God’s justice, and His justice had to be met. If we appeal to God’s mercy, we appeal to His whim, and are left with doubt. In appealing to God’s justice, we may be certain of forgiveness, because Christ met the justice of God and paid for our sin in advance.

“What shall we say then?” Paul asks. “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” (Romans 6:1-2) It isn’t just that Christ died for us, but we died in Christ and in so doing, we died to sin. What happened to Christ on the cross is deemed to have happened to us. That is, we are crucified with Christ and baptized into His death. We are then justified, which essentially means ‘it is done’. The price is paid in full, and on the basis of justice, we are forgiven and reconciled to a Holy God.

The way to spell the Christian life is D-O-N-E. It's not what we do; it's what Christ has already done. Paul writes in Romans 6:10, "The death he died, he died to sin once for all..." And in verse 11, "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin..." Our sin died with Christ on the cross, which means we are forgiven. To believe anything else is, in effect, questioning the power of the blood of Christ shed for us. Being forgiven is not a subjective feeling, but is objective truth and has nothing to do with how we feel. As Christians, we are baptized into Christ's death, which wipes the slate clean and we become united to Him in a life everlasting.

PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, for dying for me and taking all my sin upon Your shoulders. Keep me mindful that my old self died with You, and be my strength to live a godly life.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I think of myself as having died with Christ?