

Sermon text.

Rom. 6:1-11 'What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 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.

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, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who died is freed from sin.

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again, death no longer is master over Him.

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ.'

***Humility precedes the Grace of God. Notice that each means of God's grace requires our humility to participate in God's grace.**

'I must decrease and He must increase' John the Baptist

Means of Grace 9-part Series.

- 1. Reconciliation to God. Rom. 5**
- 2. Baptism. Rom. 6**
- 3. Lord's Supper. Rom. 7**
- 4. Praise. Rom. 8-12**
- 5. Prayer. Rom. 8**
- 6. Preaching. Rom. 10**
- 7. Fellowship. Rom. 12**
- 8. Church Discipline. Rom. 13,14,15**
- 9. Giving. Rom. 16 'help her'**

Intro.

The general idea of the Christian is that God works in their life to reconcile us back to God.

It is as if we live in a modern day version of the Roman empire. Where it is ok to be a Christian but it is kind of obscure what that even means.

This is another reason why Paul writes this letter. And the theme of the letter could be followed by the rhetorical questions that Paul asks.

Q: What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

There are things we say commonly today; those are common confessions.
There are things we stop doing and start doing; we stop sinning and live graciously.
There are things we die to and things we become alive to; baptism into Christ Jesus.

We even see in V. 13 'the members of your body', and 'your members as instruments'

Physically and spiritually speaking, there are two understandings of this word member, and the word body in the NT.

The first is how member as it applies to yourself and the second is as it applies spiritually to all of us collectively.

The first as it applies to body is as it applies to yourself and the second is as it applies to all of us as collective church.

It does matter how you live your Christian life individually, because what you do individually actually has an effect on everyone here.

If you live individually in continued sin, you begin to bear out the effects of that on everyone here at church.

No man is an island. And where a person's sin is hidden in private or on public display either way it effects everyone else.

A Biblical example.

One man's sin effected

A general, practical example.

Say a person continues to violate God's first commandments of idol worship by giving glory to

We live in an age of rebellion. People today are very rebellious. Rebellion is the individual expression of self-pride.

Self-pride expresses itself by rebelling against whatever circumstances of authority it finds itself in.

This is typified by young adults on college campuses.

A distraught student once came to a college professor and he said to the professor I am very sad', the professor said, 'Why are you so sad?'

The student said, I am just a simple student and come from a simple background and I see so many of my fellow students protesting about things, and I just don't have anything that I feel that I can protest about!

The professor responded, 'Oh don't worry, I'm sure there is something we can find for you to protest about before the semester ends'

If you don't have something to rebel against, sure enough society can find something for you to rebel against.

But what I am here to say is, God has done something and we must understand that Jesus Christ has given us something to submit to and to humble ourselves to and it is there that we live in God's grace.

The only way to enjoy God's grace is to submit our lives to God.

In our age people have such an easy access to complaining and grumbling, it becomes easy to not live in God's grace.

This is acknowledgement of either a person who is not reconciled to God or it is an act of the flesh showing our old self.

If you don't acknowledge their complaining and grumbling, it turns into protesting and if you don't do anything about the protesting, it turns into policy, and the policy, turns into new procedure, and the new procedure turns into just the way it's supposed to be.

It's the new normal. No, no no. It's the age old, abnormal. It's the age old curse of rebellion.

We actually have so much to be thankful for. But when a person is filled with rebellion that comes from self-pride, they are not thankful because they are entitled.

And their self-entitled personality never expresses thankfulness or gratitude because they have yet to be humbled.

IF they were humbled they would be gracious. Because God gives grace to the Humble.

If you feel that you have less than your fair shake, if you feel that you are coming up short on worldly goods, and it makes you feel a little less than average...Believe it or not this is a humbling work of God's providence and it is given by His grace.

It's the very reason Jesus Christ came to the earth. It's the very reason Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again. Jesus Christ humbled Himself, to the point of death on a cross, for this very rebellion.

Jesus didn't come to save the whales or cure all of our ails.

Jesus lived and died for the purpose of Reconciling us to God. And it is this reconciliation that leads us to a logical step. **Water Baptism.**

Water baptism is a Means of God's Grace to continue to proclaim the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Recently I came across a baptism questionnaire from a Christian church in South Asia.

7 Questions on the Baptism Questionnaire.

Q: Are you willing to leave home and lose the blessing of your father?

Q: Are you willing to lose your job?

Q: Are you willing to go to the village and those who persecute you, forgive them, and share the love of Christ with them?

Q: Are you willing to give an offering to the Lord?

Q: Are you willing to be beaten rather than deny your faith?

Q: Are you willing to go to prison?

Q: Are you willing to die for Jesus Christ?

Consider this questionnaire in contrast to the **rash of baptisms** that have taken place this past year.

Baptisms that took place at pre-planned, staged, events. High on emotion, ecstatic in the moment.

I think we do well to give **detailed and deliberate consideration** to what is meant by Christian baptism.

Little consideration is given to the cost of following Christ. Little consideration given to Christ's words in the Gospels.

Where should we land as a church? Should a church require a public testimony about a person's baptism?

Q: Should a church require baptism for entrance into membership? Doesn't that seem harsh and old fashioned.

What about the ecumenical chorus of Cum-bia-yah, do they have merit to their positions? Positions where we blend sprinkling as opposed to immersion, or just avoiding the topic altogether.

Where should we land on the topic of Baptism? Is it really all that important anyways?

Salvation is by Faith Alone in Christ Alone, is it really necessary that I get baptized?

My conclusion is that baptism is very important.

It is very important for you as a person and it is very important for the church as a whole.

Looking at the Bible we see that every NT Christian was baptized.

John the Baptist came baptizing. Jesus was Baptized. And all the converts in the book of Acts knew without asking, knowing that it was a natural by-product of the Christian faith to be baptized.

Even in the OT, Jewish converts from had a 3-part system of entrance of showing faithful conversion to the Jewish faith; circumcision,

Paul even showed his **high standard toward baptism** when he said 'I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one would say you were baptized in my name' 1 Cor. 1:14

It seems clear that Paul was ashamed of the sinful behavior of the Corinthians and their poor, errored, and immature view of the Christian faith.

A person's baptism is an expression of their relationship to Jesus Christ and their commitment to their local church.

Paul establishes early in his letter that the public symbol of baptism is an indicator of a changed life.

The public symbol of baptism is indicative of being dead to your old self, and alive to your new self, which is being alive in Jesus Christ.

Baptism is important. That is to say the least.

The point that Paul is making here in Romans 6 is a metaphorical point. It is an analogy that baptism represents.

Theological Basis for Baptism.

This basis is rooted in the message of the Gospel.

For example.

When John the Baptist was baptizing there were three groups of people that approached him for baptism.

1st was the Jewish people 'repenting of their sin' and were being baptized for the remission of sins.

2nd was the Pharisees and Sadducees who did not repent of sin.

3rd was Jesus Christ who had never sinned.

Of the 3 groups.

John baptized the repentant Jewish in anticipation of conversion to Christ.

John baptized Jesus as Jesus did not need to be baptized from sin, but to 'fulfill all righteousness' as Jesus obeyed every aspect of God's will.

But John did not baptize the unrepentant Pharisees and Sadducees.

The point I want to highlight with that is that baptism is a matter of God's Grace and that Grace requires Humility on our behalf.

It takes humility to recognize our own sin. That we need forgiveness. That we need to be cleansed from all unrighteousness.

If you and I want the Grace of God, it will only come through Humility. Through Humbling following Him in the means which He has given to us in the Bible. Baptism is one of those means.

Baptism is a public testimony of being immersed in Jesus Christ.

V.3 'all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death'

Salvation is a matter of immersion as well. Salvation in Christ is not some annexed portion of your life. Where I put this over here and I do this over there.

When you are saved, you are in Christ everywhere you go. You are immersed in Christ and you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

It is a symbolic statement of acknowledging personal sin, personal salvation from sin, death to your previous life, and resurrection to new life in Jesus Christ.

This deliberate viewing of baptism has been largely lost in our own age.

It's something really odd in our culture in general. We live in an age where we do not think as deeply.

Church Architecture and Baptism.

Now this might be hard to believe but the design and construction of church buildings says a whole lot of what that church was thinking before they moved into their building.

A community starts a church, the people get interested in the teaching, the town begins to financially support the work of the church and soon enough you need a bigger building.

So the people get really excited and say we will spend all of the people's money to build this new fascinating facility.

But what they fail to think through is that that new facility is going to need about as much financial maintenance as the equivalent of 1-2 full time staff members and might even now require a paid maintenance worker.

That type of financial pressure can serve to direct what a pastor does or doesn't teach about.

The trouble with this is it has almost always gone south after this. The number of examples showing a near immediate decline in doctrine, a near immediate accommodation of the teaching to the biggest financial givers, and an elevation of the man teaching to an untouchable status, ultimately setting him up for failure and a major fall from grace.

But we can see this regionally, and at many churches through our country. They do not have a baptismal.

I even remember preaching at other churches where in the preceding staff meetings I was asked to not preach about baptism because the natural outwork of that preaching would be that people would want to get baptized but the church didn't have a baptismal.

Q: Can you see how your church architecture can subtly direct your church's doctrine? A church should have the ability to baptize its members.

Q: If I was sprinkled as an infant, should I be baptized? Well, if you were sprinkled as an infant, you still have not been baptized. So yes, you should still be baptized. The word baptize means immerse, it doesn't mean sprinkle.

It is a symbolic act of the spiritual act of immersion in Jesus Christ.

With all this teaching,

Q: Why would someone not be baptized if they are a Christian.

1. They don't know. **Lack of Knowledge.**
2. They don't care. **Indifference.**
3. They have gone so long without knowing and without caring that at this point it looks bad to get baptized. **Embarrassed.**
4. They hide, do not share the background of their testimony, which otherwise would serve to encourage and corroborate the testimony of many other people, thus building

common fellowship, but instead they hide and act like they should not obey these clear commands to be baptized, and it is at that point that self-pride sets in. **Self Pride.**

It takes Humility to share your testimony before people. And it is interesting how people think it is cute that an 8 year old would share their testimony, but a 58 year old would be embarrassed and hide from sharing their own testimony.

Friends, this series teaching is about a means of grace and spiritually speaking it is always humility that comes before grace.

Q: Who should baptize you?

Should your spiritually interested uncle? Should my golfing buddy?

I remember being at a church service where I was baptizing about 10 different people. At the end of the service a man came up to me and said, 'Well I'm going to take this guy and baptize him now' as he put his arm around a work buddy. I just was at a loss for words.

How about this one, Should I have the Youth Pastor baptize me, instead of the Lead Pastor, because I happen to think the Youth Pastor is more personable and the Lead Pastor rubs me the wrong way?

Let me clarify this. The person that officiates the ordinances should be the ordained pastor of that church. Be it, baptism, the Lord's supper, preaching God's word. The average congregant is not held responsible to preach the word, and 'not many should aspire to be teachers for theirs is greater judgment' Ja. 4

A pastor is ordained locally by that local eldership and that local congregation that recognizes him as their pastor. Depending on the size of the church that could range from 1 to multiple ordained pastors. In general though, it's usually one person.

Most churches are not large enough to need more than one pastor. The average US church size is between 30-50 people.

I'll put it this way. The person that baptizes you should be the same person that has to give an account to God regarding your discipleship to Christ. Traditionally, that would be your lead pastor.

Q: Should my child be baptized?

Yes. 'do not hinder the child from coming to Me' Matt. 19:14

Yet, there should be parental involvement and agreement. A child's first authority is their parents.

Not capriciously. Not whimsically. Not coerced for social impressions.

But if your child has been taught the Gospel. They have heard and responded of their own free will.

If your child knows that they have been saved from the wrath of God toward their sin because of Jesus Christ.

If your child knows the resurrection and the merits of baptism. Then yes, your child should be baptized.

Jesus put it very simply with regard to baptism.

'Permit it to be so to fulfill all righteousness' Matt. 3:15

Exposition.

V. 1 'What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?'

Paul is using a Greek idiom to express the absurdity of thinking that the doctrine of Justification by Faith was a means to continue to live a life of sin.

Grace does not increase because we continue in sin, nor does God give us more grace because we

A warning.

For those who continue to sin.

Heb. 10:26 'if we continue to go on sinning after the knowledge of the truth, there remains no sacrifice for our sins'

'The person who sins definitely, whether native or foreigner, blasphemes the LORD' Num. 15:30

'If a man sins against his brother, the LORD can intercede for him, but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?' 1 Sam. 2:25

Point being, we need a Heavenly Intercessor, that person is Jesus Christ.

We must be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It is an immersion into the personhood of Jesus Christ.

There are some markers of being immersed in the Personhood of Jesus Christ; the sound like this - **lowliness, meekness, modesty, submission, humility** - each of these lead to God's grace.

Paul, a former Pharisee himself, knew what the **common objection** to preaching God's grace would be.

The Jewish Pharisees would say it would give a license to sin.

What Paul says in this verse is that that would be ridiculous.

But that is how people in theological error think.

Having a proper view of God leads to a low view of ourselves not a high view of ourselves.

Lowliness, meekness, submission, humility.

A person immersed in Jesus Christ is not bothered by being on the bottom, nor do they get overly concerned with how they are treated or the responses that they receive.

The reason for this is that a person who is immersed in Christ realizes how much of a gap of grace was passed and connected by Jesus Christ.

People in error, those who are self-deceived, Their mind is in such a false extreme that it immediately jumps to another false extreme.

It is the **ricochet theory**. It is a boomerang theology.

Their own error comes back to bang them on their own head.

Notoriety leads to downfalls.

Paul makes the point that genuine saving faith, faith that actually justifies a person, is not going to result in that person continuing to live in that sin that they have been justified from.

Why is that? Well, Paul uses the concept of baptize to explain what that would not be the case.

V. 2 'Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?'

Into His death.

Death from what? Turn back to ch. 1.

God can either turn you to Christ or turn you over.

Being turned over to Christ is a result of humility that ends in Grace.

Being turned over to yourself is a result of self-pride that ends in personal destruction/Self-destruction.

Paul gives a long list of somethings to be dead from in chapter 1.

Rom. 1:18-32

3 x 'God gave them over' - If God gives someone over that means God is not leading their life, directing them, disciplining them, keeping them from sin. Instead, God has given them over to their sin.

1st 'giving them over'

V. 24-26 **'God gave them over** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen'

All of our hearts have lusts. Longings for things in this world. It ranges from all kinds of things. But this is true spiritual warfare. To fight against works of the flesh.

Whatever it is, you do well to acknowledge that lust and die to that sin. Kill it.

Every heart knows its own lusts.

It's been said before that the human heart is an idol factory. The manufacturer does not want to acknowledge the production line of new lusts and old lusts, and the large inventory on hand of idols. But the truth remains, idolatry is what a worldly life looks like.

God's grace to us is to be turned away and kept from these lusts.

One of the greatest ways to see that God has **'given a person over'** is that they exchange the truth.

Exchanging the Truth is the same thing as Self-deception.

2nd 'giving them over.'

V. 26-27 **'For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.'**

These types of people are ruled by passion, not reason. But reason is not enough to receive God's grace. Reason does not precede grace, humility precedes grace.

Degrading passions are passions/lusts that degrade who you are as a person. They are passions that are unnatural, they are passions that are perverted.

Not only is sin self-deceiving, it is also self-destructive.

The practice of homosexuality leads to physical death. 80% of adult homosexual males have either HIV or AIDS.

This should in itself terrify people. But they are so deceived by their own sin, they justify their behaviors.

But friends, this is NOT limited to them.

3rd 'God gave them over'

V. 28-32 'And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind'

If a person does not want to praise God, pray to God, or hear preaching about God, that is a bad, bad place to be.

If a person is unwilling to acknowledge God any more, it is highly likely the next thing God will do is to turn them over to their own ways.

Once that is done, what option do you and I have? What can man over turn that God has turned over?

Can we cast our pearls before swine, when our Christ has told us not to?
Can we have fellowship with Christ and Belial? Can we be filled with light and maintain fellowship with darkness?

The depraved mind looks like this...

'God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful'

That's a pretty comprehensive list. It takes Humility to acknowledge to see this in our lives, it takes courage to turn away from it. It results in Grace to do so.

When we say a person is dying to sin, dying to a sinful life. These are those things.

God's means of Grace is not a provision to continue living in these things.

If God turned a person over to these things, then God's grace is turning a person away from these things.

V. 32 'and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.'

'Give hearty approval to those who practice them.'

It stands to reason that we should not give hearty approval to things God calls sin.

That's a good place to start. But it doesn't end there.

They approve of these things.

Friends, Paul is not approving a life of sin. That's obvious.

But he's also not establishing a life of self-righteousness either.

Paul is giving the Gospel of Grace.

So often, hold to one foot of the Gospel and cut off the other foot.

You need two feet to walk and for the Gospel to walk into your heart, you have to understand that

V. 3 'Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into His death?

Into Christ.

Into His death.

V. 4 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.'

Newness of life.

Water baptism is symbolic of living a new life in Christ. It should mark a point in a persons life where they are accountable of living a life immersed in Jesus Christ.

V. 5-6 '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, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.'

United with Him.

Union with Christ is a central point and result of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Body.

What does the word baptism mean?

It means to immerse. A life immersed in Christ.

What types of baptism do we see in the Bible?

Baptism of repentance. Baptism of fire/judgment. Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

These are not separate events. These things are represented by immersion into Christ through faith and that is individualized at a person's baptism.

These are each symbolic in the church's water baptism.

Baptism is Administer to...

Individuals, Households, and only Professing believers

Individuals.

Acts 8:38 'And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.'

Acts 9:18 'And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized'

Households. The first convert in Europe was in the city of Thyatira.

Acts 16:15, 33 (Lydia and household) 'when she and her household had been baptized' (the Jailer) 'immediately he was baptized, he and his household'

1 Cor. 1:16 'I did also baptize the household of Stephanas'

Only to Professing Believers.

Acts 2:38 'Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins' and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'

Matt. 3:6 'they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins'

Mk. 16:16 'He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved'

Acts 8:12 'when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.'

Baptism is administered by immersing the whole body of a person in water.

Matt. 3:16

Acts 8:38,39

Baptism is an appointed ordinance of the Church by Jesus Christ.

Matt. 28:19-20 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'

Repentance and the confession of sin was necessary for Baptism.

Matt. 3:6

Acts 2:38

Baptism signifies the remission of sins in a person's life.

Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Rom. 6:3,4

Faith in Jesus Christ is a necessary condition of Baptism.

Acts 8:37, Acts 18:8

Application.

Baptism is a demonstration of God's Grace to God's Church. Baptism is a means of seeing God's grace at work through God's people.

But like anything, there are versions of baptisms that have corrupted the understanding of the ordinance and it has resulted in many who have been baptized but fallen away from living a life immersed in Christ.

Should I be baptized?

The short answer is yes. But there are some qualifying things to consider.

Ten Questions to Consider before Baptism.

1. Am I reconciled to God through faith in Christ?
2. Am I willing to testify of my faith in Christ before my church?
3. Am I willing to commit to my church and live a life that turns from sin and seeks Christ in all my life?
4. Am I willing to be committed to growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ?
5. Is this just an interesting thing that I want to do or do I understand that this is a symbol of my death with Christ and resurrection with Christ and I am now living a new life with Christ?
6. Am I willing to be held accountable to this Christian lifestyle?
7. Do I understand that baptism does nothing to save me, but is a public testimony of Christ's saving work in me?
8. Do I understand what the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ means and how that is symbolic in baptism and made real in my life through faith?
9. Do I understand how baptism and the Lord's Supper are enduring symbols of Jesus Christ's work for my life?
10. Do I understand that I have access to God through Union with Christ and can overcome sin in my life through the power of the Holy Spirit?

Naturally the consideration of these questions cause us to seriously consider the ordinance of baptism.

That's a good thing.

Conclusion. Let's pray.

Small Group Question.

1. How does the action of baptism refer to God's grace found in humility? How has the pride of man interfered with a true view of baptism?
2. How does baptism relate to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
3. Is my life immersed in the things of Jesus Christ?

- 4. Have I been water baptized and is this my next step of obedience in following Jesus Christ?**
- 5. Can we each commit to pray for the immersion of our lives in Jesus Christ?**