

**Baptism**  
**Part 2**  
**Buried With Christ**  
**Romans 6:1-4**  
**Pastor Charles Price**

If you have got a Bible this morning I am going to read to you from the book of Romans and Chapter 6. Romans is the sixth book of the New Testament. I am going to read just two verses to you from Chapter 6 – Romans Chapter 6: 3-4. And this of course is just a brief extract from something that Paul is teaching that is central to the Christian gospel.

Verse 3 says,

“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

That is as far as I am going to read. I am going to talk to you this morning about the burial of Jesus - not about His death, not about His resurrection, but about the intervening part when He was buried. And as Paul says here, “we were buried with Him through baptism into death.”

Now I confess I have never preached on the burial of Jesus before. I don’t think I have ever heard a sermon on the burial of Jesus. But it is clearly important in the New Testament.

And last week we began to look at the teaching of this chapter, Romans 6, about baptism – water baptism –, which we defined as an outward physical act, that portrays an inward spiritual truth.

We are familiar with the outward physical act. When somebody is baptized in the way that we do it here (and many churches do it), they go down into water, they are immersed under the water and they are brought back up soaking wet.

But the picture is of dying with Christ, buried with Him, and risen with Him. That is the outward physical act but it is designed to portray an inward spiritual reality. And the inward spiritual reality is that when Jesus Christ died, as we explained last week, He didn’t just die for us, but we died in Him. We are united with Him. What is true of Christ is imputed to be true of us.

I, Charles Price, was crucified with Christ legally (if I can put it this way) before God; I have died in the person of a substitute. I have been buried with Him in order to be raised

again to walk in newness of life. The outward physical act is important. Baptism is important.

And I want at the end of this short series to challenge you, if you have never been baptized in water, to do so out of obedience and because of the significance and importance of what it is portraying.

But if we talk, there are three parts to this. We talked about the first part last week – dying with Christ. The grounds on which we are declared justified because we have been crucified with Christ. All that I deserve has been paid in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am crucified with Him.

But then I am buried with Him. And this is an aspect that perhaps we don't think very much about, but it seems clear as I have looked into Scripture to think about this, that it is important because it is reiterated so many times.

Here in Verse 4:

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death.”

In Colossians Chapter 2 and Verse 12, Paul says there that the grounds for our liberation from the demands of the law is that we have been buried with Him in baptism.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3 Paul gives the essential facts of the gospel and they include this:

“That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Now Paul we might think could have written that and omitted the bit about Him being buried. He could have said that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and we would probably think there was nothing missing in that statement.

But there would have been something missing, and what would have been missing was that He was buried.

And clearly the burial of Jesus is an important element in the gospel. And I want to talk about this, this morning. And I trust in so doing that there may be many here who may find a new freedom and liberation in understanding the significance of this.

I want to talk about two things. I want to talk first of all about the burial of Jesus Himself, the historical event, the burial of Jesus.

Then I want to talk about what Paul addresses here in Romans 6 – our burial with Jesus. Baptism is the outward physical act that portrays this as an inward spiritual truth.

Let me talk first then about the burial of Jesus Himself (and you may be aware of this), that although Jesus Christ was buried in a tomb, He ought not to have been buried because He died, according to Roman law, as a criminal. And as a criminal, His body was the possession of the Roman authorities.

And the normal practice was that the bodies of those who have been crucified were incinerated by being thrown onto a fire that burned continuously in the Valley of Gehenna, which is a very little, but very sharp valley outside the southern wall of the city of Jerusalem. It was really the rubbish dump of Jerusalem. All the garbage was thrown down into that little gully and there was a fire at the bottom which continually burned.

And so the garbage was being burned all the time. And everybody from Jerusalem would bring their garbage and dump it there. And the carcasses of animals that had died were thrown onto this fire in the Valley of Gehenna. And the bodies of criminals who had been executed were thrown onto this fire.

The two thieves that were crucified on either side of Jesus would have been taken and dumped there. That was the normal process. And the family had no rights of access to that body. They were now the possession of the Roman authorities and they buried them as they saw fit.

But Jesus' body was not placed there. And I want to explain why and I want to explain the significance of why.

We know that Jesus was crucified because early on the morning of His crucifixion, the highest Jewish authority that existed, the Sanhedrin Council, which consists of 71 members presided over by the High Priest, met together and they passed a resolution to recommend to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, that Jesus should be crucified.

They had trumped up charges against Him. There were charges of terrorism – He was going to destroy the temple in Jerusalem because He told them, “You destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it” (talking of course about His own body).

They accused Him of blasphemy because He claimed to be the Son of God. And they had their list of charges that in Jewish law warranted His execution. But they couldn't authorize it themselves; they had to come to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, with a recommendation that Jesus be crucified.

Pilate listened to His case that same morning. He wanted to get Him off his hands and it just so happened that Herod, who was the ruler in Galilee, was in Jerusalem at the time. Jesus came from Galilee, so he sent Him across to Herod for Herod to interview. Herod sent Him back to Pilate.

Pilate went out to the crowd and said, “What shall I do with this man?” And they began to chant, “Crucify Him, Crucify Him, Crucify Him,” so he handed Him over to be whipped by the soldiers. They took Him out to the hill called Golgotha and they put Him

on the cross at 9 o'clock in the morning. Things had moved very quickly. What time the Sanhedrin Council had met we don't know, but they met very early to make this recommendation.

But the recommendation of the Sanhedrin Council was not unanimous. There were 71 members on the Council and the vote, if you read the New Testament very carefully, you will see the vote was 69 for and 2 against the recommendation that He should be crucified.

And the two against were first of all a man called Joseph of Arimathea. It tells us in Luke 23:50,

“There was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council...”

(And actually Mark Chapter 15 describes him as a prominent member of the council, so he was influential in the Council.)

And it says that

“Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man...had not consented to their decision and action.”

So that's one vote against. Joseph of Arimathea had not consented with the others. The other vote was a man called Nicodemus. He was introduced to us earlier in John 3:1 as,

“A man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.”

And these two men were friends of Jesus and both of them voted against the recommendation.

Now here is the significance: these two men were the only friends of Jesus who knew that Jesus was going to die that day unless Pilate had vetoed the recommendation. Jesus' own disciples did not know He was going to die. He had told them; they didn't believe it.

And so by time He was hung on the cross at 9 o'clock, these two men - Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus - worked to give Him a proper burial.

It says in John 19 that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. But there comes a moment when you throw caution to the wind and you stand up to be counted. And for Joseph of Arimathea, this was the moment. And he and Nicodemus planned a burial for Jesus, but of course the body belonged to the Roman authorities.

So at the time that Jesus died – or actually it was just before Jesus died, it tells us in John 19:38,

“Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus.”

It was Pilate’s prerogative. And so he asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. And then it says,

“With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away.”

And later it says – the rest of that verse in John 19 says,

“He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night.”

“Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen, which was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

“At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.”

Now this is interesting. They took the body of Jesus, placed Him in a tomb in which no one had ever laid, that was close to the place where He had been crucified.

If you go to Jerusalem today, there are two sites that claim to possibly be the tomb of Jesus – nobody can know for sure.

One is an ancient site over which is built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and that church was built in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century and at Constantine’s instruction in 326 A.D. when Constantine had become converted in 313 A.D., issued his edict of Milan, which allowed Christianity to legally exist in the Roman Empire (which it hadn’t been allowed to do up until then). And he took an interest in the sites related to Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. And he authorized a church to be built over this site that was thought could be the tomb of Jesus.

If you go to Jerusalem today, you would probably visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is jointly run by the Greek Orthodox Church and by the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Roman Catholic Church. And so if you go there today it is full of the practises of these churches related to icons and relics and all this kind of thing. But it’s there and has been operating there for many centuries.

The other site that stakes a claim to possibly being the tomb of Jesus is known as the Garden Tomb. And it was only identified in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century so it is relatively recent - identified by a man call General Gordon.

When he came to Jerusalem he saw a rock face; it's about 50 metres sheer rock with a couple of caves – one here, one here, a sort of bridge between them, and another cave at the bottom.

And he looked at that and said, “That looks just like a skull.” (And if you go and look at it today you will see exactly why he thought that.) On top is a sort of green area. Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified was known as the Place of the Skull. Some have said it's because people were put to death there and there were bones and skulls and all kinds of things; it's called the Place of the Skull. But maybe not; maybe it's because the shape of the rock on which it was, was the shape of a skull.

So General Gordon, going back to his New Testament, said, “In that case, if this is Golgotha, near Golgotha was a tomb. And around the side – and if you have ever been there you will know this – where this rock faces the shape of a skull (and by the way, right at the base of it is the Arab bus station in Jerusalem – it's belching out diesel fumes all the time so it's not the most attractive place to go. And the top of it now is a Muslim cemetery so you can't go there anyway.) But around the corner there were a couple of caves, graves hewn into the rock.

One of them has an opening, behind it a cave with a shelf in it. And in front is a gully where a stone would have been rolled along to seal the tomb. And there are many, many reasons for recognizing this could well be the site.

But the interesting thing about the Garden Tomb is when you go inside, it is shaped with a little platform on which would be lain the body. And if you look carefully, at one end there has been another about two inches chiselled in, an additional two inches to the original size of it, indicating that perhaps the body that was buried here was not the original body that was intended but a body that was about two inches taller.

And Jesus was buried in a tomb that had been made for somebody else – in fact, made for Joseph of Arimathea himself, in his own tomb.

That is fascinating, but why am I telling you this? Is it because it is simply a fluke of history that Jesus happened to have two friends on the Sanhedrin Council who had the advance notice He was going to be crucified? (“Let's get ready to bury Him properly. Let's get all the myrrh and spices and linen together that we can give Him a proper burial.”)

No, because the Scriptures had prophesied in advance that He would be buried and the prophecies about His burial are very specific. Let me read to you what Isaiah 53:9 says – Isaiah 53, many of you know, is the classic prophesy about the crucifixion of Christ, describes detail the effects of the crucifixion. And then it says this:

“He was assigned a grave with the wicked,” (that's in Verse 9 of Isaiah 53) and with the rich man in his death.”

What does that mean? One commentator suggests a good alternative way to translate this would be to say, “His grave was appointed with the wicked but with the rich man was His tomb.”

That makes it a very remarkable prophecy about Christ. His grave was appointed with the wicked – He died as a criminal outside the city walls, crucified by the Roman authorities, destined, in normal circumstances, for the incineration of His body that happened to all the Roman criminals who were put to death.

But, as this prophecy had said over 700 years before, His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was His tomb. And Matthew 27:57, introducing Joseph of Arimathea says,

“As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph. Going to Pilate, he asked to Jesus’ body.”

Here is a rich man taking the body of Jesus who had died with the wicked and burying Him in a rich man’s tomb.

And more than 700 years before Christ was ever born, Isaiah, writing prophetically, says,

“His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was His tomb.”

And exactly, precisely, as Isaiah had written, the story unfolds.

I have said before and I will say it again, we have a better reason for believing the facts about Jesus than simply that the Bible tells us that they happened. And the better reason for believing is that the Bible told us that they would happen long before they did, and in every instance was exactly precise. That’s a better reason for believing.

If you pick up today’s newspaper and read yesterday’s news, you are not impressed; you expect to do that. If you pick up today’s newspaper and read next week’s news and next week it happens exactly as it was written this week, you would probably want to know who the editor is.

And if he wrote next month’s news this week and it happened next month exactly, and next year’s, how about 750 years in advance – exactly - you probably would want to know the editor wouldn’t you?

That means that the burial of Jesus was not just an incidental bit of detail, but in the mind and heart of God was predetermined with a purpose. Now what is that purpose? So much so that as Paul says in Romans 6, in explaining the meaning of baptism, not only have we died with Christ, crucified with Christ, but we have been buried; we are therefore buried with Him through baptism into death.

So what is the meaning of our burial with Jesus? Well let me suggest this to you. There is a finality about burial. When somebody dies, the period between their death and their burial is often a very difficult time. People talk a lot about the person who has just died of course, and very often they speak in the present tense about that person.

When my mother died nearly four years ago, I knew she was close to dying and I flew from Toronto across to London and she actually died while I was in the air on the way there.

And when I arrived I got involved in the arrangements we had to make for her funeral. I went to register her death. And I was intrigued by the fact that the lady who I dealt with, and she filled out the forms having asked me lots of questions, spoke in the present tense about my mother. “How old is she? What is her address?” and that kind of thing.

When I went to the funeral home, my brother who had flown in from Australia; we went together to the funeral home. The lady who we talked to there also talked in the present tense. “Yes, she is in that room, when you would like to go and see her.” And when we did go in to see her, this lady came with us initially and then she withdrew. But she said to us, “She looks very much at peace.” (In other words, she was saying, “We did a good job.”) But it was all in the present tense; that’s the point.

But the moment the funeral takes place nobody talks in the present tense. It’s all past tense now. “How old was she? Where did she live?”

We have an expression in our English language when we say of something – maybe an idea or a plan that’s finished, we say, “Hey, that is dead and buried.” What we mean by buried is it’s gone; it’s done with.

So it is with us that the burial of Christ says He not only took my sin on Himself on the cross; He not only died my death, as we talked about last week, so that we stand before God, (if I may use this term and hope you understand it, legally we are justified – justice has been satisfied fully and completely); not only have we died in Christ, but the sin that was the cause of that death has been buried with Him. It is over. It is gone. And the symbolism of that aspect of baptism is not only have I died with Christ, but buried with Him.

There’s an old hymn that came to mind as I was preparing this, this week that I haven’t sung for years but I knew it when I was young and I found the words to it. The words are these:

*Buried with Christ and raised with Him too  
What is there left for me to do?  
Simply to cease from struggling and strife  
Simply to walk in newness of life*

But the point there “buried with Christ – what is there left for me to do?”



You know some of us who are Christians have recognized that we have died with Christ. We understand the death of Jesus as our substitute and we understand our union with Him, that I died in Christ as far as God is concerned. But we have never understood that we have been buried with Him. Buried.

In other words, our sin, our guilt, our past, is buried. And the reason why I say many of us don't grasp this is because we go on interacting with our sin, we go on interacting with our guilt, we go on interacting with our past. We come back and confess the same sins again and again sometimes because we don't really know that they have gone.

I remember a lady coming to see me one day – a lady in her forties – and told me that twenty years ago she had engaged in some sin. She didn't tell me what it was; it was irrelevant to know what it was, but some sin that had pierced into her conscience. She said, "I have confessed this sin to God again and again and I have no peace in my heart that I am forgiven."

She said, "It's damaged my marriage to my husband, it's damaged my relationship with my children." She said, "In the church that I go to they have asked me to teach in the Sunday school and I would love to, I love kids, I love teaching, but I have said no because I am not worthy - and because of this thing."

This lady had confessed the same sin again and again and again. She knew that Jesus Christ died for her, but she did not know that not only did she die in Christ, but she was buried and this thing is buried. She was resurrecting it.

And I have met and talked to many people in the same situation. And we have to understand a doctrine of burial with Christ.

What does God do with our sin?

There are a number of graphic pictures that He gives to us and I have pulled out six I am going to give to you, that in different ways are saying the same thing about the finality of the sin that has been placed on Christ, that it's gone, it's dealt with, it's buried, but using different pictures and imagery.

In Micah Chapter 7, here's the first one - Verses 18 and 19. It says,

"Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?"

"You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot"  
(listen) "and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea."

The idea of that is that hurling our iniquities into the depths of the sea is that it is beyond recovery. You have taken our sins and You have dumped them in the sea and they have sunk and they have gone.

Corrie Ten Boom, a very beautiful Dutch lady whose story many of you will be familiar with – Corrie Ten Boom used to say that when God threw our sins into the depths of the sea, He put up a sign that says, “No Fishing”. But a lot of us do go fishing there. Some of you go fishing there.

One of the biggest holds the devil has on many people is that they go fishing into the area that God has thrown into the depths of the sea and removed them from us.

And sometimes we are so conscientious, we are so embarrassed about the fact that we don’t deserve this; we don’t allow ourselves to understand and enjoy the liberty and freedom. Although we don’t deserve it, our sin has been buried with Christ.

Here’s another verse – Psalm 103:12, David says,

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Now notice he doesn’t say, “as far as the north is from the south” but “as far as the east is from the west”. You see the north is a fixed point. The south is a fixed point. If you go north, you will cross the North Pole and begin to go south.

Earlier this year I flew from Toronto to Hong Kong. And we took off – this non-stop flight – took off from - about 10 hours - from Toronto and we flew due north right up over the Arctic Circle.

And having flown north – and we had a little map you could follow the journey on – having flown north over the Arctic Circle, without changing direction, we began to go south and cut across Siberia and then down over China and then eventually into Hong Kong.

If you go north, you start to go south; it’s a fixed point. But if you go east, you can go right around the world and never begin to go west. If you go west, you can go right around the world and never begin to go east.

And says David, “as far as the east is from the west”; in other words, this is infinity, these are irreconcilable points. He has taken your sin as far as the east is that way, as far as the west is that way, He has removed them from you.

Let me give you the third picture. It’s in Isaiah 38:17 where it says,

“You put all my sins behind your back.”

Now listen, if God is omnipresent, that means He is in all places at all times, as He is. Where is there such a place that can be described as being behind His back? And the answer is I don't know because nothing is behind His back except our sin. It's so far out it's in a place that doesn't even exist. He has thrown it behind His back.

Here's another one – the fourth one. Isaiah 43:25:

“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

Now that phrase or similar phrase to it is used several times in the Bible. He remembers our sins no more. This is a unique ability that God has. Not that He is forgetful, but He never recalls it. He will never use it as evidence against you. God isn't naïve about us of course but He never recalls, He never brings back; He remembers it no more.

I wish we believed that. I think some of us are like two brothers I heard about. And these two brothers had been fighting all day. And at the end of the day the mother came to the elder of the two boys and said, “Listen you have been fighting your brother all day long today. You need to make it up with him and say you're sorry before you go to bed.”

He said, “I am not going to make it up. I'm not going to say I'm sorry. He started it; it's his fault.”

So his mother tried to appeal to his sentiment a little bit and she said, “Just suppose your brother died during the night. Wouldn't you be sorry in the morning if you hadn't said – if you hadn't forgive him?”

And this boy thought for a moment and then he said, “Alright, alright, I will forgive him but if he's alive in the morning...”

You know I think some of us have that feeling don't we? “God, please forgive me!” And He does, but I'm scared stiff about the morning.

Romans 8:1 says – Romans 8:1 – the fifth of these verses I am giving to you – it says,

“There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

No condemnation. God has nothing against you, in other words.

A man who was a great influence in my life when I was young said that when he became a Christian, God had saved him from such a, such a messed up past. And he was reading his Bible and came across this verse, “There is now no condemnation.” He said he took his pen and he underlined “no condemnation” so hard, the ink went right through to the book of Philippians. He said, “I spoilt my Bible but every time I turned the page there was the ink, there was the ink, there was the ink – no condemnation, no condemnation, no condemnation.” It ran out at Philippians he said.

And yet I know many Christians who do feel condemned but I will tell you this: it is not the voice of the Holy Spirit that is speaking to you; it is the voice of Satan. One of Satan's tasks – Revelation 12:10 tells us is that that he is the accuser of our brothers. He accuses them before our God day and night. (And brothers there includes sisters; it's an inclusive usage there.)

One of Satan's ministries, if you like, is to accuse you. It's not difficult. There's all kinds of junk he can haul up and remind you of.

But there is a picture in the book of Zechariah of a man called Joshua who is standing before God and he is standing before God dressed in filthy rags and Satan is standing at his right side accusing him. And he is standing dressed in these filthy clothes, and he is accusing him to the Lord. And then it says,

“The Lord rebuke you, Satan!”

Then the Lord said to an angel who was standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes and put on him clean clothes with a clean turban.”

And then he said to this man Joshua,

“See, I have taken away your sin, and I have put rich garments on you.”

The point is this man, Joshua (don't confuse him with the Joshua who led Israel into Canaan – another man), but he is standing like many Christians stand. Satan is at their side accusing, accusing, accusing, and the result is they are dressed in filthy rags, they feel dirty, they act as though they are dirty; they are embarrassed about their dirt. And God rebukes Satan, “Satan get out of here. Cover him in clean clothes.”

And you and I are not dressed in the dirt of our own past; we are dressed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. There is no condemnation.

When the Holy Spirit speaks about your sin, He convicts. When the devil speaks, he condemns. There is a big difference.

With conviction, He also points to us the way out. He doesn't convict us of sin in order to humiliate us and embarrass us and condemn us. He convicts us of sin in order to liberate us. He points to the cross of Christ.

But when the devil condemns it's like a wet blanket that sits on you; you can't move.

And the last verse I am going to give you is in 1 John 4:17 where it says,

“In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgement, because in this world we are like him.”

That is an amazing verse. This is the extent to which God's love is complete among us, that on the day of judgement we will have confidence. Why? Because in this world we are like Him.

Why are we like Him? Because there was a day when He was like me, when He was made sin for me. And when He died, I died in Him. He was my substitute. I died in Him. He was buried; we were therefore buried with Him, as Romans 6 says, but have risen now to walk in newness of life. That newness of life is now the life of Jesus Christ within us and we are now clothed with His righteousness.

We have a righteousness that is not our own. I remember some time ago I was going to preach and I was very aware of some sin in my life. And I thought to myself, how in the world is God going to use me in this situation because I know what I am like? How is God going to take what I say and use it in people's lives?

And God spoke to me. It wasn't any words; it was a sudden realization that came into my heart and I had no doubt it came from God, "This has nothing at all to do with your righteousness. If it did, all your righteousness would be like filthy rags." That's what the book of Isaiah says about our righteousness. "This has nothing to do with how good you are; this is My righteousness that you are going to stand in and speak from."

And we need to know that. That's why Paul, here in Romans 6,

"Don't you know that you were baptized into His death and we were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death."

Don't you know this? This is objective truth. This is not a subjective feeling. It's as objectively true that we have died with Christ and been buried with Him as it is that Christ died for us and was buried for us. Because we have been united to Christ in our standing before God. Therefore it has nothing to do with how you feel.

We don't believe that Jesus Christ was crucified and buried because we feel it. And we don't believe that I have been crucified with Him and buried with Him because I feel it. It is a fact, an accomplished fact.

And there are many Christians and they have come to the cross, they have understood the death of Jesus. They have come to the cross and said, "Lord, please forgive me," but they have not come to the burial and said, "I am buried with Christ. This will never play a role in my life again. This is not going to rise up and haunt me. This is not going to appeal to my conscientiousness and say, Hey, you shouldn't feel good about anything anymore because you have messed up in such a bad way."

It is gone, but we don't believe it, we don't believe it.

And the worst sinner I know is me. And I know all the thousands of reasons why I am totally disqualified from knowing God. But every one of those reasons was attached to Jesus Christ on His cross and it was buried with Him. And undeserving as I am and undeserving as you are, we accept the incredible work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. I have not just confessed my sin to know I am forgiven, but I go with Him into the burial, into the grave, and I leave it there.

And do you know, many of us don't make progress in the Christian life because we don't get this far. You know a lot of Christians come to the cross. That's the substance of their Christian life. "Okay, my sins are forgiven."

And then the understanding is basically, "Okay, now I am going to heaven when I die so I'll hang around, get sprinkled with disinfectant once in a while to keep you clean. But eventually you are going to get washed up there on the shores of heaven."

No. We are forgiven because we are united with Christ in His death. God's justice is addressed and satisfied. That sin is buried. Therefore, undeserving as we are, it is past; it is gone.

That lady who came to me in her forty's twenty years ago, "I committed a sin. I have confessed it to God a thousand times. A day doesn't pass by that I don't think about that particular thing."

I said to her, "You know, it's not God that is speaking to you everyday about that thing; it's the devil. He's got a foothold in your life because there's a nice juicy sin that he is going to squeeze the life out of you with. In your conscientiousness you know you deserve it and so you accept it. But although you do deserve it, Christ took it from you. Will you let Him have it? Will you let Him not only carry it in His own body on the cross, will you let it go into the tomb and seal the tomb? It's gone."

What purpose? Whew! I'm off the hook!

No. As we are going to pick up next week, don't you know all of us who are baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death.

Listen to this:

"In order that," (this is the purpose) "just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Not the old life, but it's going to heaven instead of hell, but a new life. It's not changing just your destination; it's changing the very composition of your life. This new life, as we will see next week, is the very life of Jesus Himself.

“I have been crucified with Christ yet I live,” says Paul, “but it’s not I; Christ lives in me.” That’s the new life, which we will talk about next week.

But I have no doubt there are folks here this morning and you have understood that the cross of Christ, the death of Jesus is the grounds for which your sin may be forgiven because He satisfied the justice of God. But you have never understood you were buried with Him. And the tomb was closed and sealed and everybody went home. It’s over.

And the foothold that the devil has in many of our lives – and we are told not to give the devil a foothold – is this very thing: the foothold of our sin by which he comes to condemn and condemn and hold us back from enjoying the new life that is designed to be lived in us and through us.

Baptism in water is the outward physical act that portrays that. But I am coming to believe because of the importance of water baptism in Scripture that sometimes it’s the act of baptism that demonstrates this not just to us ourselves and to other people around us, but as Ephesians Chapter 3 says, that

“Through the church the manifold wisdom of God is made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms.”

In other words, through His people, this is one aspect – in demonstrating this we are saying to all those principalities and powers, which are described as evil in hostile – or at least hostile towards God, hostile towards us – that we demonstrate to them in this act of baptism that this person has been crucified with Christ and (are you watching principalities and powers in the heavenly realms?) buried. Over. There’s a finality to this. But risen again to walk in newness in life.

And some of you are stagnant in your Christian life because you have never been baptized. But the outward physical act is only valid as it portrays the inward spiritual truth. That’s why we need to know what it is to be crucified with Christ because He died and I died in Him. He was buried; I was buried. And all the sin that brought about His death is buried with Him. And the resurrection is not to the old life - that stays dead – but to a new life.

And I am going to lead you in prayer in just a moment. And I am speaking in particular as we close in prayer to those who are probably Christians, so if you are not yet a Christian, this is part of the gospel. The gospel is essentially about being reconciled to God. These are the means by which a human being can be reconciled to God.

For those of us who are Christians, who have understood the cross, understood He died for me and I can confess my sin to be forgiven, but we have never understood that we have the – not only the right, but the obligation to see that as buried and it’s behind you and leave it there buried.

I am going to lead you in a prayer in which I want you to renounce all your past sin, to renounce the devil's hold that he has on us because of our conscientiousness and the sensitivity of our hearts that says, "I don't deserve this."

The more sensitive you are the bigger your struggle with this. But you have got to say, "Lord, I don't deserve it. It's not me that's on trial here; it's Christ who is on trial here. Did He take my sin to the grave? The answer is He did.

So why in the world are you still playing with it? Let it be buried.

God will bring a fresh liberty. You see that clears the decks, that now I can begin to understand and enjoy what this new life is, that is the resurrection life.

But if you are still bogged down in your sin, you will never enjoy the resurrection life.

Let's pray together. If God has spoken to you this morning and you know what it is to be condemned by the voice of the accuser of the people of God (Satan), I am going to ask you to renounce that in prayer with me. Then I am going to ask you to stand as an outward physical act but it reinforces the inward spiritual truth that you have embraced.

Lord Jesus, I thank You so much that I can be forgiven no matter what it is, that when I bring it to the cross of Christ and recognize it was my sin that He was burying, I confess it to You, I cast it on You.

You died the death I deserved. You, who knew no sin, were made to be sin for me. But thank You, You took that sin to a tomb. The body that bore my sin was buried and the tomb was sealed.

I recognize, Lord Jesus, I have been buried with Christ; not only died with Him, but buried. And I take those sins that rise up, those memories, that guilt in my past that rise up to condemn me; I take that, Lord Jesus, and I renounce the devil and all of his works and I place them in the tomb. Help me to know experientially the freedom and liberty of them being buried with Christ.

And thank You for the new life that you replace it with. Bring me into freedom and in bringing me in to freedom, the power to live this new life that You Yourself will live within me. Thank You on the day of judgement we stand before You in confidence. It has nothing to do with confidence in ourselves; we have none. The confidence that in this world we are like Christ because You were once like me and You have given to me Your reputation, You have given to me Your righteousness. And I stand as clean as Jesus. Thank You so much. In Jesus' name.

If you prayed with me those words, or that's the expression of your heart, just stand to your feet. I am going to pray for those who will stand.



