

Romans

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Romans 6:8-14



Vss. 8-11

- Staying with a theme, without directly drawing on his common metaphor of marriage to convey truth about the Christian life, it is easy to see Paul's thinking here. In a Christian marriage the two become one flesh and the starting point of the marriage is the wedding. So as the wedding marks the beginning of the marriage journey, so too does baptism mark the beginning of the disciple's journey. And as the marriage journey continues, the concept of the two becoming one flesh goes from being more than just a concept but a very present reality. So, it is in the life of a disciple. In baptism we are united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. The two, Christ and us, becoming one, He in us and we in Him. This is how we KNOW that we are saved, for "if we have died with Him, we **shall** live with Him". The two have become one. In a very real way, this is how Christ can say that He will be with us always.
- Someone once made the observation that a person can divide their life's story just as the world divides its own life story: BC and AD. The life of every baptized believer in Jesus Christ is divided this way. There was the time in your life before you met Jesus and were saved. This is the BC, the Before Christ, time in your life. And then once you have surrendered to Christ and you are His, saved and baptized, this is the AD, the Anno Domini, of your life and it is the age you will live in for eternity.
- The result is a complete transformation of your life, the sanctification of your life whereby you truly do become a new creature in Christ. When Jesus says to Nicodemus "you must be born again", the Greek word Christ uses there is "anothen", meaning "from above". It is the same word used to describe what happened to the veil of the Temple when Jesus died, torn in two from the top down. As Will Willimon once put it, you've got to get born from above; what God wants to do is an attic to basement renovation of your life; remake your life from the top down!
- So with Christ you have died to sin and the life you live, you live alive to God IN Christ Jesus...and with Christ in you.

Vss. 12-14

- In the previous verse, Paul has been talking like a theologian. Here in verse 12 he shifts to the practical application of the theology. For too many people down through time, being a Christian changed nothing. When one stops to consider the countless wars, butchery, injustice, and debauchery that was so common in the so-called Christian world over 2000 years, it is hard to see that being a Christian mattered very much at all. Ghandi was once asked if he was secretly a Christian. He replied, "I like your Jesus, but I don't like your Christians". Instead, how we live out our lives day to day, now that we are one with Christ, makes us stick out, unique. I like how the KJV puts it in 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people...". The apostle John points out in 1 John 3:10 that, "the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious...". Now that we belong to Christ, we **ARE** peculiar to the rest of the world. We no longer, "go on presenting the members of (our) body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness" as we did in the BC time of our life. We now live in the AD. Now "we present (ourselves) to God as those alive from the dead, and (our) members as instruments of righteousness to God". We are different. We are not like the rest of the world who do not know Christ. We are in fact, peculiar.
- So HOW do we do it? How do we live in a world that is a cesspool of sin and not be consumed by it? There are two factors in play that enable us to live righteous in an unrighteous world. First, sin cannot be Master over us because we do not live under law, under some codified list of do's and don'ts. We live under God's amazing grace. We are not yet perfect. As Paul later says in Romans 7:15, "For what I am doing, I do not understand, for I am not practicing what I would like to, but I am doing the very thing I hate". Yet **in Christ** there is forgiveness and there is correction and restoration. We are never to presume on it. That is the mistaken thinking Paul is speaking against at the start of the chapter. But He IS with us **always**, there to pick us up and clean us off when we stumble and nudge us in the right direction. Second, because Christ is in us, we do not live this new life, this peculiar life, on our own strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is there so that we are not led into temptation. The Spirit is there to give us power to stand firm against the world's rushing tide of sin. We can live this new life because He is in us and we are in Him. There is no other way.