

Dear Friends in Christ, grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Imagine a person close to you, be a child, spouse, friend who sins against you. Then asks forgiveness and you forgive them and give them a warm hug. They feel good and so do you. Then they do this process again and again, repeatedly. Each time you forgive them and give a warm hug. But finally you call out “Whoa! What’s going on? You keep doing a sin against me, again and again and again!” “Oh they say, your forgiveness and hug feels so good I intentionally sin to get more of it.”

Crazy! To continue in this, right? Well in Romans 6 the church at Rome believed that the grace of God for our sins was so good, why not sin more to get more grace! And so they were. Paul calls a halt to this by saying, “Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? How can you who have died to sin still live in it?”

To respond to this situation Paul begins a Holy Baptism 101 class. Jesus didn’t explain a lot how Holy Communion or Holy Baptism works, but Paul is the systematician, the person who takes these wonderful events of God and pulls those ideas together in a more coordinated manner. So today in our text from Romans 6, Paul would title his class today: how do we live our Baptism?

Paul begins by declaring that in Baptism we have died. We have been joined to Christ’s death on the cross in Baptism. There is a consequence to sin: death, separation from God. The judgment and consequence of sin is death. Jesus took our sin upon himself. It took him to the cross. Sin separates us from God. Jesus died in that separation on the cross for us. So in Baptism we, with our sinful self are joined to Christ’s death and die.

Now God could wait for the end of our life to pronounce judgment upon us for our sin. We could live our whole life waiting, wondering and fearing that judgment. How hard that would be to live with. Instead God joins us in water and Word to Jesus’ death in the moment of our Holy Baptism. Like God did today with Jett Jordan Moss who was baptized this morning.

Then a surprise move happens: As Jesus was raised from the dead; we are also raised from death to new life. Judged, forgiven and made a new person, a child of God—just as Jett Jordan Moss was this morning!

God puts to death our sinful self in Baptism and that makes a big difference, Paul says. There is an old saying that says, “You can’t beat a dead horse.” A horse is beaten, punished, to train, to control, to bear the hate of the owner. The beatings are awful. When the horse dies, though, it is free. Imagine being held captive, in chains and a cell, beaten and controlled by an evil master. Though you have tried, you are never able to escape. There is only one way to be free, that is to die.

Only one thing kills the AID/HIV germ for ever. That is death. Luckily, there are now many good treatments and that is wonderful. Likewise the only thing that cures sin is death. So God,

in Christ, has brought this death for sin up to our Baptism in Christ. We are not waiting for the end of our life.

We are dead to sin, Paul declares in verse seven. The cruel master can't beat and control us any longer. We are freed to live and love as a child of God.

In hypnosis, the goal in treating smoking or eating problems is to bring the conscious and the subconscious together, on one page so they operate together. So they have a unified approach. When faced with a choice to smoking or eating something you shouldn't, you are given a word to use: CANCEL. And you go back to the unified approach and say no.

We can still sin; we will continue to be tempted. But we don't have to obey. We are dead to the master of sin. We can say no, I am baptized, I don't have to obey. I am freed of your power. In one of the Harry Potter movies and books, there is a "house elf" who is controlled by the owner of the house. But if the house elf is given an article of clothing of the owner, it is freed. In the one book, this house elf is given a sock of his master, by Harry Potter, and is freed to say no to the owner.

"Likewise consider yourself to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord."  
Verse 11. Live and love as a new person of Christ. Amen