

“The Inevitable Question” • Romans 5:20-6:4

- (1) **Every Christmas, thousands of children ask the inevitable question: *How does he do it?*** The recently released movie, *Arthur Christmas*, explains everything :)
- (2) **In our passage, Paul addresses another inevitable question: *if the gospel is all about sheer grace, what motive is there for obedience? Does this lead to a philosophy of life that says, “I love to sin, God loves to forgive - so we get along great!” Isn't preaching radical grace dangerous? People will abuse it!***
 1. **5:20-21**
 2. **Then 6:1**
 3. **The Reformation Study Bible note, “So great was [Paul’s] emphasis on the freeness of God’s grace in the face of sin that his preaching had been accused of antinomian tendencies, or ignoring the ethical requirements of the law.”**
- (3) **This passage is a hinge** that marks a **transition** in the letter
 1. Romans 1-5 - describes the foundation of saving, justifying grace
 2. Romans 6-8 - describes the dynamics of enabling, sanctifying grace
- (4) What we discover is that **there is an inseparable connection** between what God has done FOR US in justification (our new position) and what he does IN US in sanctification (our new power)
- (5) **This connection is illustrated by baptism (vv. 3-4)**
 1. I understand that many (most?) of us come from a church context where immersion was the mode - and this passage was used to confirm that practice
 2. However, I think it is unlikely that Paul is teaching us about the mode of baptism... I want to suggest that, rather than *water* baptism, Paul is teaching about the actual union Christians have with Jesus through *Spirit* baptism — **the actual, inward, regenerating work of the Spirit**
 3. The word baptize(d) is used over 80x in the NT; but only 6 uses the phrase “*baptize into or baptized into*”
 - **1 Cor. 12:13**, “*For [by] one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.*”
 - **Gal. 3:27**, “*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*”
 - **1 Cor. 10:2**, “*For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*” (*united to M as meditational rep*)
 - And the references in Rom. 6:3-4

- Where Paul further explains the phrase “baptized into” in verse 5, as being “united with”
- The Bible uses human marriage as an analogy -- a covenantal union where two become one, bonded, inseparable — Xians are called the bride of Christ and Jesus is the bridegroom
 - Some of us guys talk about “marrying up” - some folks have been known to “marry for money” :)
 - Christians are like that! - we are dirt poor and Jesus is extravagantly wealthy - riches of grace... ***in this union we get it all!***
4. So, Paul is using the meaning of inward, supernatural Spirit baptism to illustrate the connection btwn **saving grace** and **enabling grace**
 1. Baptized into his death — **justification**
 1. “we died to sin”- *free from the penalty of sin*
 2. Jesus’ death was MY death
 3. No more condemnation / no more charges / my sin is buried!
 2. “In order that” —> walk in newness of life — *live free from the power of sin* — **sanctification**
5. Both emphasize God’s work of grace—> one **for us** (*the work of Jesus on the cross*), the other **in us** (*the work of the Spirit in our hearts*)
- (6) **Jesus promised to send the Spirit** as his disciples inward strength — *to be his presence w/ them, in them & through them*
- (8) **Which is why Paul answers the charge in the negative so strongly (v. 2)**
 1. This does not mean that we do not struggle with sin or continue to sin
 2. It is not an expectation of perfection - but there will be some fruit on the tree —> **John 15:4-5**, “*I am the Vine, you are...*” (*Holy Spirit*)
- (9) **So, let’s make some application:**
 1. What should newness of life look like?
 - Doesn’t start w/change in **behavior**; change in **heart** — *change from the inside out*
 - The first fruits
 - **Repentance** - I stop making *excuses*, stop shifting blame, stop *defending*, stop

protecting my own righteousness (outward goodness)

- If repentance has not felt like death, I may never have really repented
- Just yesterday on the drive back to GA from MS, almost got run off the road, honked... and they honked back! How do you think I reacted? :)
- **Faith** — rest in the gift-rtns of Jesus
- Other fruit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... *also things like generosity and compassion and forgiveness...*
- **Can you imagine what this would look like in the home - marriage / parenting? in the church? to the world?**

2. Why do I see so little fruit in my life? Two main reasons...

- I'm not united to Jesus at all, or
- I'm looking too hard for fruit and not at Jesus.
 - Trying to get better may be blocking you from Jesus - often I want to stop sinning so that I will be seen as a good person - but good people don't need a Savior... ironically, the pursuit of holiness CAN be a barrier to union with Jesus!
 - **Robert Murray McCheyne**, "For every one look at yourself, take ten looks at Jesus!"

(10) **IN SUMMARY: The Christian life is about living in UNION with JESUS -- like a branch on a tree -- sharing a wardrobe --> this is where we apply the greatest effort!**

- **To consciously wear the garments of gift righteousness! I trade in my filthy rags of self-righteousness - no longer defined by my success or my failure**

(11) **During one of his remarkable comeback victories this year for the Denver Broncos, Tim Tebow wore a mic...** down by 10, threw a sure touchdown pass to Demaryous Thomas (GA Tech)... went through his hands... He went to sit by Tebow on the bench to apologize— what do you think Tim Tebow said? *you will catch the winning TD and be the hero, you are still my receiver, not defined by dropping that pass —* **QUESTION: how do you think that affected Demaryous Thomas? his next catch WAS for a touchdown, and the Broncos won the game**

(12) **In the gospel, Jesus is saying the same thing** — I am for you, *you will not be defined by your failure* -- I died for that, and your failure died with me!

- **I'm sticking with you b/c my relationship with you is not based on your performance. It is based on mine for you.**
- **What if I could hear Jesus saying that to me? How would it affect me?**