

January 10, 2016
Sermon for 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Romans 6:1–11

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Romans 6:1–11 (ESV)

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

Picture yourself at the water or in a boat on the water or sitting on a dock with or without a fishing pole. Maybe you're at a lake, a tank, or the ocean.

There's something tranquil about water. After you sit at or in the water a while, the neck muscles, tightened by life's tensions, relax and let go, almost making you fall asleep.

I like to think of the waters of Holy Baptism being much the same. Lives of separation from God, lived under the world's philosophy of right and wrong rather than God's Law and Gospel.

The world tells us that if we fail, we are only human or worse yet, our failures become "life choices" which makes it ok in the world's eyes, no matter what God says.

Yet, we died with Christ. Moreover, through baptism, we live with Christ! How comforting that is! Because we died with Christ, we now live anew by God's gift to us of water and Word!

By Dying through the Waters of Holy Baptism, the People of God Live! And that means our lives now stand in stark contrast to what they once were!

As nice as this sounds and as good as it is, don't think that all is well and good!

Satan looks at this and devises a plan to extricate us from our faith in Jesus!

He and his minions will stop at nothing until they've accomplished their mission. He even entices us with the “dangling carrot,” if you please, that the more we sin the more God will shower us with His grace! . . .

And the Roman Christians were falling for it.

That's the premise for our text. Paul has to take up this question: “*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?*” (v 1).

We don't need any lifestyle change whatsoever, they were saying, so live life as you want.

We might fall for it too. “I know marriage is *supposed* to be between one man and one woman, but I guess God's grace covers that, eh? I don't want to be insensitive to some-one else's feelings, right? I mean, God wouldn't really send somebody to hell if he doesn't repent, would he?”

“I know sex is *supposed* to be just in marriage, but what we do isn't, like, horrible. We really like each other. We'll probably get married someday. God's gracious, loving. He won't really send us to hell if we don't repent, right?”

“I know God says in the Bible ‘I hate divorce’ ”—that's Mal 2:16, by the way—“but God would surely understand *my* circumstances. We just don't get along so why work on it. We don't even have to repent, Surely He'll let it slide.”

Now what's wrong with this picture? Well, for one, this is Satan talking, not the Lord. Satan doesn't listen to Holy Scripture, doesn't like Holy Scripture, and won't honor the words of Holy Scripture. He tries to get us to question its authenticity and truth.

When faced with the truth, he will try to use it against us.

He will twist the Word into something unrecognizable to anyone but the “old Adam” in us!

This broken logic—what the world clings to so tightly—will never hold water in the face of God’s Word! God’s judgment on unrepentant sin, continuing in sin when we know it’s against what He says in Scripture, is exactly what He says in Scripture that it is: eternal suffering in hell.

Paul says we can’t even think about continuing in sin.

We are dead to all of this nonsense! *“Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death”* (vv 1b–4a).

Mankind is satisfied to live and function in this perverse thinking and doing. But Paul reminds the Roman congregation that this kind of perverse thinking has no power over us (v 6).

Our sin has been drowned. We have been set free from all these sins, not because they don’t matter, but because Jesus died for them.

We are forgiven because Jesus took all these sins to the cross.

Our sexual sins, our sins of silence when we know others are sinning, our failures to keep our marriage vows, all were nailed to Jesus’ cross, taken away from us. When we repent, call a sin a sin, and ask for forgiveness, we are forgiven! No matter the sin, God forgives us our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness!

When we repent, turn away from those sins, we no longer bear the punishment we've earned.

We're delivered from hell to heaven! *"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his"* (v 5).

So, then, just how does the Church, God's people, continue to live in this world? How do we live in this world but not let the world's authority and power take over our lives? How do we live now since we have "died to sin," drowned, and been buried with Christ in Baptism? Very good questions, don't you agree? *It's a matter of "reemerging" to new life.*

Baptism offers us this new life! *"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life"* (v 4).

This new life is quite different, because the power of God's Word has taken over our lives. How we conduct our daily life is different.

Oh, this isn't to say we won't ever sin again; we will—and often! But Baptism says that Satan's old perverse distortion of this Word will have no power over us ever again! The "old Adam" in each of us has been nullified!

We now reflect the glory of the Father—made available through a cross and empty tomb.

We now reflect this "new life" in our world just as Paul did after his Damascus road experience—and we do it gladly and willingly.

The old has gone. That's the way it has to be, you know!

We cannot go on living back there! We share the resurrection of Jesus!

So, breathe your new life and live it to the fullest in Christ Jesus!

Oh, and don't be bashful about telling someone you know who is mired and living in the past!

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

Sermon Outline

Through the Waters of Holy Baptism, the People of God Live!

Romans 6:1-11

- I. Satan's perversion is that we may sin more so that grace may increase.
- II. Is God really fooled by our rationalization of our sins?
- III. But having been buried with Christ by Baptism into death, we now live a new kind of life.