

# Discipleship: Union with Christ

## Romans 6:1-14

Discipleship is about following Jesus, the greatest man who has ever lived in the history of the world. Trying to follow in our own strength is futile, leading either to pride or despair, so God gives us our salvation *in* Jesus. Before we ever follow Him, we believe in Him, and everything He did is ours (Jn. 6:29). This is our union with Christ, what John Murray calls “the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ.” Our position in Jesus is the foundation of the entire Christian life. We start, continue, rest and finish here. All things cohere in Christ, including faith and works, justification and sanctification.

### ***Dead with Christ***

God works grace so incredibly that where sin abounds in the life of the believer, grace does all the more (5:20). Sin is not just kept at bay, but reigned over by grace through righteousness unto eternal life (5:21). A certain kind of person hears this and orders a keg (v1). It’s all about them. But the converted heart hears again that it’s all about Jesus—His death and our baptism into it (v3). We were not simply raised with Christ. We were crucified, died and buried with Him so we could walk in newness of life (Gal. 2:20; v4). We think our baptism is saying something primarily about us, but it’s actually saying something about Him: He died, and you died with Him. He rose, and so will you (v8). We want crisis events, tokens of remembrance, and signs of identity. God gives us all these and more in our baptism. This is how Paul confronts our drift into sin and doubt: do you not know you were baptized into Jesus’ death? The sign is wonderfully objective. In order to get this we need to understand our union with Christ. How does another person’s death do me any good? Jesus is our representative substitute, the second Adam. We understand this in other places. We won the Super Bowl (last year), not some guys who happen to play here. We legalized marijuana in Washington State. Well, we died and have been set free from sin (v7). We could say these things were not done despite us, but on our behalf. Everything Jesus did was on our behalf. Our union with Christ is described in many ways: as the Father and Son are one and in their house (17:21-23; 14:23); like stones of a building with Jesus as the cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-22 1 Pet. 2:4-5); like a husband and wife are one (Eph. 5:22-23); as a head and a body (Eph. 4:15-16); like branches in a vine (Jn. 15).

### ***Alive with Christ***

This changes everything. On my worst day, I’m no less justified. I’m no less dead in Christ. I’m no less atoned for. If we’re dead with Christ, “we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (v5). No Christian is enslaved to sin (v6). This tells us that based on who won, we *will* win (v8). Jesus can’t die twice because that would be double jeopardy (v9). Among Reformed Evangelicals there is a trend that says we can’t ever *really* obey God, that our best works are like filthy rags (Is. 64:6). They are if we use them sinfully to justify ourselves! But if not, “You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember you in your ways” (Is. 64:5). If we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, and don’t let sin reign, we follow Christ (vv11-12). We control our passions; they don’t control us. Paul says to “present yourselves to God” (v13). This is language of sacrificial worship, but instead of bringing a bull, you bring yourself. We bring a lot of things to God—time, money, families, etc. But all of it is a token of the fact that we bring our entire selves. We are before Him now doing exactly this. Because Jesus lived, died and rose for you, so did you, so present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. Sin has no dominion over you, only grace (v14).

## NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

### Today's Passage: Romans 6:1-10

*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.*

1. The apostle Paul is addressing the bad idea that if God will forgive us for everything, we might as well sin up a storm. Why shouldn't we (verses 2-3)?
2. He says we were baptized into Jesus' death. Have you been baptized, and if so, when? What happened to sin in Jesus' death (verse 6)?
3. When we remember that we were baptized into Jesus' death, that we've been set free from sin, how should we think of ourselves (verse 11)? If we died with Jesus, then what did he do next that we will also one day do?
4. Draw a picture of Jesus bursting out of tomb, full of resurrection life and power. You might put the guards blown over on the ground and scared.

### Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

*So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. —Romans 6:11*