

RELATED SCRIPTURES

Galatians 3:26–27 | Genesis 17:1–14 | 2 Corinthians 5:16–18

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 03.16.25

SUMMARY

As Paul the apostle unfolds the gospel in his letter to the Romans, by the time we get to Romans chapter six, he links the doctrines of baptism and “Union with Christ.” When new believers come to Christ, they hear the preaching of the Word and are baptized; the Lord proclaims and seals his covenant promise with water. What the Word is to the ears, the water is to the other senses. The sacrament of baptism proclaims, signifies, and seals the gospel on the heart of the believer but also gives the new convert the opportunity to testify before the Church and the world that they belong to Christ. Paul states that to be baptized into Christ means to be joined to him in *everything* that Jesus is; it’s as if the believer “puts on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). This means the Spirit has changed the believer—they are fundamentally a different person, or as Paul states, they are a “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The Spirit has changed the person who was dead in his sin and trespasses, and made them alive in Christ. The Spirit gives them the desire to love God, see the truth, and exercise faith, and it is therefore *impossible* for them to return to their previous life; they are dead to sin and have been raised in newness of life (v. 4). It is not that they will never sin, but their inclinations have changed as the Spirit has given them a new heart and a disposition to hate their sin and walk in the footsteps of Christ.

Water baptism is not the means that puts the believer in union with Christ; the work of Jesus alone brings about this union. However, baptism is the sign and the seal that represents the spiritual baptism done in the heart of the believer. As a sign *to* faith, the Lord calls the believer to place this seal on the members of their household, specifically, their offspring. Just as the Lord promised to bless the nations through Abraham (Genesis 17:8), the Lord uses his Church as a part of Israel (Galatians 6:16) to continue his covenant promise.

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Romans 6:3–5.

What are all the benefits of being in union with Christ? What benefits does this newness of life afford believers that are not present in the non-believer?

The baptizing of covenant children is a sign *to* faith rather than a sign *of* faith. In your own words, what is the difference between the two, and why is this important?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.