

You Died, You Lived Again

Romans 6:1-11

The Baptism of Our Lord, January 8, 2012

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

You are dead. You knew that didn't you? You are dead. You died to sin.

Death rearranges all of our relationships. When we die we no longer get to talk to people that we knew in life. When we die we no longer get to have a relationship with our parents or our children. We no longer get to have a relationship with our grandchildren. We no longer have a relationship with our spouse. In fact since the marriage vows state that we will remain faithful to our spouse until death parts us, once we are dead we are no longer married to our spouse. The marriage vows state that marriage ends at the point of death. We no longer talk to people. We no longer spend time with people. We no longer enjoy their company. They no longer enjoy ours.

This is why people grieve when we die. When we die we are gone. The relationship that we used to have, we have it no longer. People grieve the loss of us. They miss our personality. They miss the conversations that we used to have. They miss the time we used to spend together. They miss those things and they hurt because they are gone.

You are dead to sin. That means that your relationship to sin is over. Sin can no longer spend time with you. Sin can no longer have conversations with you. Sin can no longer enjoy your company that it used to before. Sin will grieve your loss. Most importantly sin can no longer reign over you. You are dead. Sin can no longer be your master. God has removed you from under the dominion of sin. He has severed your relationship with sin. You have died. Sin is no longer your master.

When did you die? When you were baptized. That is when you died. Not only did you die, but you were buried in baptism. You were put into a grave or a tomb when you were baptized. And you did not die just any old death when you were baptized, you died the death of Christ. When you were baptized you were baptized into the death of Christ. If you have been baptized into the death of Christ, that means among other things that you died. If you died your relationship with sin is over.

It is like Tevye mourning the loss of his third daughter. She did not die a physical death as hospitals and doctors measure it. She married outside of the faith and so Tevye considered her to be dead. He did not talk to her. He did not have a relationship with her. He did not allow her to talk to him. It was over as far as Tevye was concerned.

This is why children whose parent gets Alzheimers and lingers in a nursing home for years will grieve the loss of their parent. The parent no longer knows them. The parent no longer remembers them. They cannot have the conversations that they used to have any more. It hurts the children. They grieve the loss of Mom or Dad. Then when the parent physically dies the children do not express as much grief as other children do after all Mom or Dad was already dead before they died.

That is the way it is with those of you who are baptized. You have died before you are dead. You have died to sin. You do not talk to it anymore. You do not allow it to talk to you anymore. It is over as far as you are concerned. When did you die? You died when you were baptized. You were baptized into the death of Christ.

Since Jesus was buried after He died you also were buried. When were you buried? You were buried when you were baptized. You were buried together with Christ. You were buried together with Christ through Baptism into death.

What did Jesus do with His tomb? He rose from it. If you are buried with Christ into His burial, what will you do with your death? You will rise from it.

What is the resurrection of Jesus? It is a new and glorious life. It is a life where the glory of the Father can be plainly seen. It is a life that brought joy to the disciples who saw Him risen from the dead. It is an indestructible life.

What is your resurrection? It is resurrection to newness of life. Your life is new. Listen to me carefully. Your life is new. Your life is new because you are baptized. Your life is new because your relationship with sin is over. Your life is new because you died to sin.

You have grown together with Jesus. You are grown together like Siamese twins are grown together. What happens to the one happens to the other also. They remain distinct people, but they are grown together. When were you grown together with Christ? When you were baptized. Since Christ is the eternal God He can be grown together with you without doing it in some weird way like Siamese twins do. He does it by the power of His Baptism.

You are grown together not with just any Christ. You are grown together with the Christ who died and rose again. Therefore you are grown together with His death. That is why you died. You were joined to Christ. When you were joined to Christ you were joined to His death. When were you joined to the death of Jesus? When you were baptized.

If you have been grown together into the likeness of His resurrection, you will also be grown together in the likeness of His resurrection.

In addition to being dead to sin, your body will physically die. Jesus lived His life dead to sin, but physically He was alive. When Jesus physically died, He physically rose again three days later. Your resurrection will resemble His. You live your life dead to sin. At the end of your life you will physically die. But since your death is grown together with the death of Jesus, since He physically rose from the dead, you will physically rise also.

How did you die when you were baptized? You were crucified. After all if you are grown together in the likeness of the death of Jesus, if he was crucified, you are crucified. Baptism crucifies you. You were crucified together with Him.

What is the purpose of such crucifixion? That the body of sin be done away with. You see Jesus is not interested merely in your physical death and resurrection. He says that you have died already in your relationship to sin. If that is the case then the body of sin has been done away with. What body of sin? Your body of sin. The bodies that currently sit in the pews and hear the sound of my voice are the bodies of sin. They are crucified with Christ. When were they crucified with Christ? When they were baptized. That is how the body of sin that is yours was killed. It had to die so that your relationship with sin would end. Anyone who has died has been justified from sin.

If you died with Christ, we believe that you will also live together with Christ. This applies not only to the resurrection of the dead on the last day, it also applies to right now. You live together with Christ on the last day in a way that you can see. You live together with Christ right now in a way that you cannot see, but nevertheless you live together with Him right now as much as you will live together with Him on the last day. Your new life has started already. You do not need to wait for it. Your relationship with sin is already over. You do not need to wait for it. Your death has already come. When you are lying on your death bed you can tell death, "I have seen you before. I survived the last time. I will survive you again."

Death no longer has mastery over Jesus. If it no longer has mastery over Jesus, it no longer has mastery over you. Because you are baptized death no longer has mastery over you. You have already died first of all. You have already risen again to a new life second of all. Physical death and resurrection are no different except that they can be seen. Once you rise from the dead at the end of time, you will no longer die. You will no longer age. You will no longer be limited by death. You will no longer be affected by anything that leads to death. Death no longer has mastery over you. Death no longer has mastery over you. Your relationship to sin is dead. Your relationship to death is dead.

The reason this is true is because your life is grown together with the life of Jesus. He also died to sin once. After all Jesus Himself was baptized. Even though Jesus was sinless He submitted Himself to His own baptism. When Jesus was baptized He too died to sin. This was His public announcement that He would lead a life dead to sin. He sure did not cut any corners when it came to dying to sin. He never sinned once. His relationship with sin is good and dead. He never talked to it. He never had conversation with it. He never spent time with it. And most importantly sin never had lordship over Him.

The life He lived He lived to God. What a life it was. Jesus always had God first in His life. He prayed extensively. He taught what God wanted Him to teach whether Jesus liked it or not. There are some things that God gives me to teach that I would rather not teach. Jesus goes ahead and teaches it anyway even though it cost Him His friends, even though it cost Him disciples, even though He was opposed by every authority that the ancients had. Even though it cost Him His life He lived every moment of every death to God. It was all to God. It was all for God. Every moment of every day was spent focused on God. He never wavered.

This is the life with which you are grown together. Therefore reckon yourselves dead to sin but alive to God!

Anyone ever tell your teenaged children, "You are not five years old! You are fifteen years old, now act like it!" That is exactly what God is telling you right now. You are baptized! Act like it! You are dead to sin! Consider yourself that way! You are alive to God! Think of yourself that way!

This whole question is one of you who are. You are a father. You are a mother. You are a husband. You are a wife. If you are these things, you consider yourself to be these things. But those are things that we can. What God is telling us today is something that we cannot see. He understands this. That is why He is taking the time this morning to explain it to you. Let me tell you what you cannot see. You cannot see that you are dead to sin, but you are! You cannot see that you are alive to God, but you are! The only thing that you can see is your Baptism and thank God that at least something in this whole conversation is visible!

If you go around telling yourself that you are not dead to sin, then you have no faith. You don't believe God. You don't believe Jesus. You don't believe what He has said about your Baptism. If you around telling yourself that you are not alive to God, then you have no faith! You don't believe in God! You don't believe in Jesus! You don't believe what He has said about His baptism. So don't do that! Consider yourself dead to sin? Why? Because you are dead to sin. You are baptized. Consider yourself alive to God and focused entirely on God. Why? Because you are alive to God. You are baptized.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.