

## Introduction: Understanding Grace Rightly

- The enemy of our souls wants nothing more than to see us destroyed. He uses our violations of God’s Law to condemn us (Job 1:9-11; 2:4,5; Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:10). The “*the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:15) is a threat to Satan’s desire to destroy us, since it forever removes the penalty of our violations of God’s Law. Since “*he is a liar and the father of lies*” (John 8:44), he then twists “*the gospel of the grace of God*” (Acts 20:24).<sup>1</sup> Paul now has to deal with that twisting of the Gospel.
- If God “*justifies the ungodly*” who believe in Him (4:5), salvation is “*the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ*” (5:15), and right standing before God is “*the gift of righteousness*” (5:17), then does that mean we can live however we want and still enjoy forgiveness, blessing, and eternal life? Is Christianity a libertine philosophy of life – anything goes and you still get to go to heaven?
- If you hear the Gospel of God’s freely-given grace in Jesus Christ and are led to believe you get to live however you want, Paul says you don’t understand the Gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> This tactic of Satan, the twisting of God’s Word, was his approach from the beginning (Genesis 3:1-5). What does it say about human nature that “*the great dragon...the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world*” (Revelation 12:9) hasn’t had to change his strategy a single time in human history? Jesus alone successfully resisted temptation by responding with God’s Word and refusing to have its meaning twisted (Matthew 4:1-11//Luke 4:1-13).

## Sin More So There Will Be More Grace (6:1-3)?!?!

### The Challenge to a Gospel of Grace (6:1)

6:1 *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?*

- Paul uses these rhetorical questions when he is answering a false teaching. In this case, he’s already mentioned an accusation made against him because of his preaching about God’s gracious salvation in Jesus Christ: “*...why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), ‘Let us do evil that good may come’? Their condemnation is just*” (3:8).
- The apostle ended chapter 5 with the statement, “*where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.*” As Paul preached this, some came to the faulty conclusion that we should sin more, since that would increase God’s grace to sinners. This is not true! As John Calvin (1509-1564) said, “*medicine is not a feeder of the disease which it destroys.*” Grace does not feed the sin it was given to destroy in our lives.

### Paul’s Response to the Challenge (6:2,3)

6:2 *May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?*

6:3 *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?*

### Baptized Into Christ Jesus

- The New Testament is clear that baptism is a public display of a faith-union with Jesus Christ:
  - “*...make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*” (Matthew 28:19).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> To be “*baptized into Christ Jesus*” means having a right understanding of Who He is, even in relation to the Father and Holy Spirit. In the “*Great Commission*” of Matthew 28:18-20, we are

- “Repent, and each of you **be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ** for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38).
- “...all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:27).
- “...in Him you have been made complete...in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; **having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God,**

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baptized into a “name” (singular), which is “*the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*” (three-fold). Being rightly “*baptized into Christ Jesus*” includes an understanding of God as Trinity. “In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, Who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him...the Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father’s glory, of one substance and equal with Him Who made the world, Who upholdeth and governeth all things He hath made, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man’s nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin” (1689 Baptist Confession 2.3, 8.2).

*Who raised Him from the dead”*  
(Colossians 2:10-12).

- Baptism is extremely important. “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). If someone has, by faith, confessed “Jesus as Lord” unto salvation, they will obey His most basic command to His disciples: be baptized. When people ask me if you have to be baptized to be saved, I always answer no. We are not saved by baptism, but it is the first step in the faith-obedience of those who are truly saved.<sup>3</sup> How can you claim to have Jesus as your saving Lord if you will not obey the most basic command He gives His disciples?

## Union with Christ in Death and Life (6:4-11). Union with Christ and Its Effect (6:4-7)

*6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*  
*6:5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6:6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with,*

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<sup>3</sup> “Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance [a command given to the Church by its Lord], it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper” (Baptist Faith & Message 2000, VII).

*so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 6:7 for he who has died is freed from sin.*

- 6:4-8 is full of statements describing our faith-union with Christ:
  - “...buried **with Him**...” (6:4).
  - “...united **with Him**...” (6:5).
  - “...crucified **with Him**...” (6:6).
  - “...died **with Christ**” (6:8).
  - “...live **with Him**” (6:8).
- Christians are those whose former life has been crucified with Christ on the cross and who walk in this world with new lives conformed to His resurrection:  
READ Galatians 2:20; 6:14-16; Colossians 3:1-4:6.

### **The Hope of Christ in Our Union with Him (6:8-10)**

*6:8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 6:9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.*

*6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

- By union with Christ, we will be what He is in glory, and are slowly being grown into that by the Holy Spirit day-by-day in this life.

### **Let Union with Christ Be Your Reality (6:11)**

*6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

## **Four Commands Out of Baptism (6:12-13)**

### **Do Not Let Sin Reign (6:12)**

*6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts...*

- In the last chapter, Paul said, “sin reigned in death” (5:21). Since those in Christ have died to “death,” sin has no power over us – we are not to “let sin reign.” We do not have to “obey” it.

### **Do Not Go On Being a Tool of Unrighteousness (6:13a)**

*6:13a...and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness...*

- Two words here are usually used to describe a soldier wielding his weapons in obedience to a commander’s orders.<sup>4</sup>

### **Present Yourself to God (6:13b)**

*6:13b...but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead...*

### **Be an Instrument of Righteousness (6:13c)**

*6:13c...and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

## **A New Relationship with God’s Law (6:14)**

*6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

- The penalty of the Law is death. Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay that penalty for us. When we are united with Christ by faith, His death becomes our death. The penalty of the Law is no longer over us. We are free from its curse, its condemnation.

## **Baptized Into...**

### **Baptism and the Church**

- Compare “...all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus” (6:3) with “we were all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). To be baptized into Christ is to be baptized into His body, the Church (Colossians 1:18,24).

<sup>4</sup> “Presenting” and “instruments.” “Presenting” (παρίστημι) is used to describe the drawing of a sword in Mark 14:47. “Instruments” (ὄπλον) is elsewhere translated “weapons” (John 18:3; 2 Corinthians 6:7) and “armor” (Romans 13:12).

**The Lord’s Supper and the Church**

- The Lord’s Supper teaches us a similar reality: fellowship with Christ is fellowship with His Church. *“Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body [the Church]; for we all partake of the one bread”* (1 Corinthians 10:16,17).

**The Holy Spirit and the Basics of Church Life**

- Note these parallels on the day of Pentecost between the response to the Gospel commanded by Peter (Acts 2:38,39) and the Church’s obedience to that command (Acts 2:41,42):

	<b>Acts 2:38</b>	<b>Acts 2:41,42</b>
<b>Inner response to the Gospel</b>	<i>"Repent..."</i>	<i>"...those who had received his word..."</i>
<b>Outward response to the Gospel</b>	<i>"...be baptized..."</i>	<i>"...were baptized..."</i>
<b>Union to Christ and His Body</b>	<i>"...in the name of Jesus Christ..."</i>	<i>"...there were added three thousand souls..."</i>
<b>How Christ Works in His Body</b>	<i>"...you will receive...the Holy Spirit..."</i>	<i>"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."</i>

- **In other words, to be baptized into Christ is to be baptized into His Church, and to be filled with His Holy Spirit is to be continually devoted to the basic practices of the Church.**<sup>5</sup>
- Coming back full-circle to Romans 6:3,4, a believer cannot experience the fullness of Christ and the work of His Holy Spirit apart from a dedication to a local Church committed to the basic biblical practices outlined for the Church.

**Jesus Christ died that those who believe in Him might die to sin and its penalty. He rose from the grave that those who believe in Him might have eternal life. Have you believed in Him alone for salvation and shown it by being baptized in His name?**

<sup>5</sup> Believers used to call these basic practices (gathering for the Word, Table, and prayer) the “ordinary means of grace.” These were Church practices commanded by Scripture that the Holy Spirit would use to strengthen and grow believers. They were ordinary in that anyone had access to them. They were “means” in that the Holy Spirit commanded them in the Word and used them. They are “grace” in that we are grown in our salvation by them. They stand in stark contrast to a consumer or entertainment-driven worship gathering in that they are basically the same in every age and every culture, and are used by the Holy Spirit to accomplish spiritual growth in believers. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1-2 the apostle Paul contrasts his preaching of the cross, which lacked “*superiority of speech or wisdom,*” with the professional orators of his day. The Holy Spirit didn’t use the showy stuff, but the basic proclamation of the cross. “The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord’s supper, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is increased and strengthened” (1689 Baptist Confession, 14.1).