

Romans 6:3-7 (NIV)

- 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.

45-06-02-Removal of the Old Self

Lent, Cross, Rebirth, Death, Baptism, Communion

Rom 6:3-7

For us to have a new life, God had to nail our old one to the Cross.

INTRODUCTION: (Text as the Scripture reading)

–[We in the **Western world** are great *analyzers*. We *dissect* and *separate things into categories*. *Compartmentalization* is our way of understanding. But this can lead us astray, *blinding us to the wholistic nature of life and our true selves.*] *Body, soul, spirit*— these are the divinely revealed categories of *human nature*. God divides them even further: the *soul* has a *mind* to think and reason, a *heart* to feel emotions, and a *will* to make choices. But God treats all these parts as one unified totality, one being, one person, one self. –This helps us explore another aspect of what Christ’s Cross did for our salvation: a **removal of the old self**. It involved *body, soul, and spirit*. For example, take **Rom 12:1-2a**, Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your **bodies** as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your **spiritual** act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your **mind**. God is after the whole person. Christ redeemed all parts of our human nature. –Christian faith is about *living a new life*– But, **HOM.idea**. *How’d He do this?* [**Theologian Fleming Rutledge**, in a 3/16 CT interview, summed up her idea of the Atonement, “I would...combine *Christus Victor* [the emphasis on Christ defeating Satan] with recapitulation.... that Christ **recapitulated** in himself the entire life of the human race (Adam)—that sums up all the different images. In doing so, he won the victory over everything that would destroy us.... Christ was victorious in our place and on our behalf.”] The visual symbol of this *wholistic view* of what Christ did at Calvary was stated by Him in **Lu 12:50**, I have a **baptism** to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! Let’s look at first...

I. The Waters of Baptism– v.3-4, *Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

A. Figurative language isn’t used where not understood. [**Wm Barclay** explained why *Jews* and *Greeks* realized baptism’s symbolic significance....

1. **Jews** fully immersed converts naked to symbolize their *burial* and *new birth*, afterward calling each one “*a little child just born, the child of one day.*”
2. **Greek** *mystery religions* regarded initiation as a death followed by a new birth. One ritual buried the *initiate* up to the head in a trench, afterwards

calling him a “little child” and feeding him with milk, as *one newly born*.]

B. Some ridicule the early church for using a nude baptism ritual, but the church fathers saw deep truths expressed in its symbolism:

1. By His naked crucifixion, Christ stripped Satan of his power.
2. Nude baptism, like burial and birth, laid the old life in a watery tomb, and a newborn life emerged from it as from a womb.
3. Taking off manmade garments symbolically prepared believers to put on Christ’s righteousness— Gal 3:27, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. [In figure drawing class at ARC, I learned to draw the human body from nude models, but the final was to be a self-portrait. I did a pastel of myself naked at the foot of the cross where Jesus hung naked. I’m holding up to Him a garment of ragged fig leaves. I entitled it “Dress Me in Your Righteousness Alone.” I used it in a show-n-tell to preach the Gospel to my classmates, quoting a line from a hymn: “Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne.” My teacher later became a Christian and was baptized that summer.]

TRANS: Satan robbed baptism of its *rich, early church symbolism* by defiling our modern minds with an *immature and shameful*, view of the body. This creates a **disembodied spirituality**. Jesus said to preach and baptize, because salvation is incarnational. Bodily baptism portrays a wholistic spirituality. So does another sacred, bodily ritual...

II. The Communion Table— v.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.*

A. The church fathers saw the Eucharist as a continuation of baptism:

1. Jesus called the Table’s bread and cup, “My body... My blood...” — physical remembrances of His *Incarnation* and His *crucifixion*.
2. They aren’t just ritual symbols, but a uniting of our whole selves —body, soul, and spirit—with His death and His life— John 6:56, Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

B. This Eucharistic Meal proclaims Christ’s death for us and shows forth His life in us, in a way similar to that of baptism:

1. We come to the Table to unite our whole person with His death, and leave the Table, nourished within by His resurrection life.
2. We need baptism once; but the Lord’s Table meets our ongoing need to die to self and to thrive upon His life.

C. This death-life Table is a place of renewal, of victory, of healing:

1. It’s a touchstone, to renew clear vision in a dark, deceitful world.

2. It’s a beach head, to confront this old age and its hostile powers.
3. It’s a healing place, to bring and leave on the Table those things in us that need to die, so we can take His life in their place.

CONCLUSION:

—**To offer us a new life, God had to nail our old one to the Cross**— v.6-7, *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. For one who has died has been set free from sin. This isn’t a feeling but a fact*— Col 3:3, *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

—**In Christ, the old race of Adam was nailed in judgment to the Cross**, so that, *in union with His resurrected life*, we might become a new race of the 2nd Adam— 2 Co 5:17, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!* Christ’s work is “finished,” but our part in it isn’t something *automatic* or *mechanical*, it’s **relational**. It involves a choice. It means personal faith: choosing to believe— Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. In Christ’s death-dealing Cross we are offered a new life, one that’s very real and very practical.* [My poem: “**View from the Cross**” If it’s true that I am crucified with Jesus,

That my life is off the throne, / That His reign is real alone,
Then I see the way to quench the wrongs that tease us,
Bitterness we can’t forget / For the ones we hold in debt:
It’s the view we have from Jesus’ cross that frees us. //
Some wounds cut a little, many deeply sever.

Am I able to forgive / When my memories still live?
Grudges linger long from pains that scar forever.
Have I sworn an oath inside, / Have I promised in my pride,
That unasked-for pardon I would offer never? //
Crucified with Christ, my injured life is ended.

I too hang upon the wood: / Death to self is understood.
As my soul with His in agony is blended,
I can only taste in part / What He felt within His heart
When on Him the wrongs of all the world descended. //

From the cross I now can stare into the faces
Of the ones who hurt me so / Standing helplessly below.
Then my voice, with His own voice, the Lord replaces:
“They do not know what they’ve done. / God, forgive them, every one.”
Thus, I pardon what His cross’s work erases.

—To live as He lived, we must see ourselves as crucified with Him....