

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*. Romans 6:4 (NIV)

May 1, 2010

Dear Friend,

It is evident in the New Testament, that an important ingredient in Christian experience is baptism. Christians have differed as to its mode and meaning, but not to the fact that it is primarily an outward and physical act that portrays an inward and spiritual experience.

Some pour water over the baptismal candidate, picturing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; others immerse the candidate in water, where they go down into the water, as a picture of dying with Christ, being buried with Him, and then being raised again to walk in newness of life with Christ. It demonstrates a once-for-all event in the life of a Christian, where they become united to Christ and made one with Him in His death, burial and resurrection.

In understanding baptism we understand the Gospel, because baptism is an outward physical expression of the work of Jesus Christ for us, and then in us.

Firstly, there is the fact of our dying with Christ. Going down into the water, symbolizes that we have died with Christ. His death was our death. We have been buried with Him, symbolized by being under the water. We have risen with Christ, symbolized by coming out of the water.

God is a just God and God is a merciful God. But when you stop to think about it, those two things are actually incompatible with one another. To be just is to give people what they deserve. To be merciful is to not give people what they deserve. These two are only reconciled



when a third party steps into the place of the guilty, accepts what is justly deserved for our guilt and thus enables us to be the recipient of mercy.

It is on the basis of justice that God forgives us, for Christ has fully met the just demands of God on our behalf. 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and JUST and will forgive us of our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9 NIV). Christ extends mercy to us, by having met the just demands of His Father. He was our substitute, and we are united with Christ in His death. It's as though we died. It's as though we paid the price, but we did so in the person of a substitute.

Secondly, there is the fact of our being buried with Him. Burial brings finality to death. The period between death and burial is often a difficult time for the bereaved, but once buried, we move on. So it is in our salvation. We need to not only understand our being united to Christ in His death, but also in our burial with Him. If we don't recognize our sin is buried with Christ, we may confess it a million times and it will still continue to haunt us. Our salvation is finalized, it is accomplished, it is DONE. It has sometimes been said that religion is often spelt D-O and it ties people to rules, regulations and expectations, whereas the gospel is spelt D-O-N-E. Nothing demonstrates this better than our burial with Christ in baptism.

Thirdly, we are risen with Christ, in order that we may walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4 NIV). The death of Christ for us makes possible the life of the risen Christ in us, and this is the strength and power of the Christian life. Christ was our substitute in death, and is now our substitute in life. It is His risen life that is the strength and power of our lives now.

This is why baptism is important in the New Testament. It does not unite us with Christ; but it is the outward symbol of our being united with Christ. What is true of Christ has become true of us. We are baptized into His history.

Every week the ministry of Living Truth reaches out to share the Truth of the work of Christ with men and women around the world via television, internet and radio broadcasts. Our hope is that many of the millions of people who hear will find fullness of life in Christ. But broadcasting across North America and overseas has its costs. It is only through the faithful support of donors like you that we can continue in this vital work of building the Kingdom of God.

Whether your gift is large or small, you can be certain that you are helping to share the opportunity for new life in Christ with so many in need.

I pray that God will continue to make a way for us as we work with the Lord Jesus in building His Kingdom. Thank you for your generous support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Charles Price