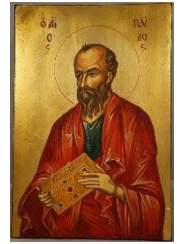


Alive to God

Romans 6:5-11 (NRSVue)



BOTH CHRISTIANS AND NON-CHRISTIANS wake up in a world stuck in mud. We awaken in an environment that teaches us to grasp what we can. We feel the ooze of sin.

But Christians rise not just from sleep, but from death. We breathe not just air, but the Holy Spirit. Others may strive to live well, but only Christians are free to please God. We honor him by who we are and by what we do.

The apostle Paul explained to the Roman Christians. Let's understand and rejoice in his lessons.

United in Death and Life

You're united with Christ. You participate in his death and life. As Paul wrote to the Roman Christians: "...if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:5). There's no doubt. God's promise is certain.

When Jesus hung on the cross, you hung with him. He breathed his last and commended his spirit to God, and you went with him. When he stepped out of the grave, alive to God and us, you rose with him. You live in union with Christ.

Aluminum is fused with magnesium and forms a strong, lightweight metal. It's used to make spaceships stronger and cars safer.

When Jesus died, you died with him. When he rose, you rose with him. You live in union with Christ. Like two metals fused into a strong alloy, you're united with him, and his life strengthens yours.

Temptation still pulls. We stumble at times. But united to Christ, and empowered by his Spirit, we resist sin's damage and grow in holiness.

The Old Self Crucified

Your “old self” was crucified with Jesus. As Paul wrote, “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin” (Romans 6:6-7).

The shackles are off. You may feel the tug of old desires, but feeling the pull isn’t being enslaved. In Christ, you struggle as a free person.

Your “old self” was the desire you had to please yourself, to do as you wanted, to hurt others. Your habits and poorly learned behaviors—greed, hatred, and anger—warped your God-given goodness. They’re all tied to your sinful person. They’re all tied to destruction.

In the old west, convicts often wore shackles on their ankles so they couldn’t run. When their sentence was done, the shackles were removed.

Can you name to yourself the sins you used to enjoy? Do you still struggle with them as temptations? Remember that you are not shackled to them any longer.

This isn’t about shame; it’s about stepping into freedom. United with Christ, your old self is gone, and your new self emerges. We aren’t holy all at once. We slip sometimes. But we progress in holiness daily.

Living Your Resurrection Now

Resurrection life doesn’t wait for the grave. It starts now. As Paul wrote, “But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God” (Romans 6:8-10).

Death no longer has dominion over Jesus. And in him, sin no longer has dominion over you, or over us.

Sin's like a toxic ocean where everyone is swimming. Non-Christians drown in it, gasping for air they can't find. And Christians can't breathe sin's poisonous water either. But we've been given new lungs. When Christ rose from the dead, he pulled us to the surface with him and gave us the breath of life.

HEAR WHAT PAUL SAID, "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

What a wonderful way to live! You're united with Christ in death and resurrection. You're unshackled from your sins. So consider yourself alive to God, free to love others.

This week, name one temptation a day. Say out loud, "*In Christ I am dead to this sin and alive to God.*" Then do as God wants. That's freedom.

Amen

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