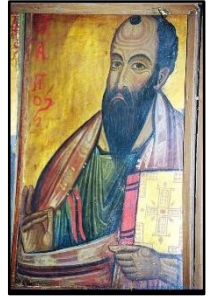


Newness of Life

Romans 6:1-4 (NRSVue)



DID YOU EVER TAKE A PURCHASE to the cashier, offer her a gift card as payment, only to hear the words, “Sorry. There’s no balance on your card?”

The apostle Paul faced a similar confusion in the church at Rome. People treated God’s grace that forgives sin as an unlimited gift card. Since the Lord forgives any sin, why not keep sinning?

Paul found this idea absurd. Let’s see how he handled it.

The Death We Died

The apostle asked, “How can we who died to sin go on living in it?” (Rom. 6:2) Paul understood that forgiveness leads to better living. Why? Because you died to sin!

How did you die to sin? Not by what you did. You liked the saltiness of sin; it tasted like freedom.

Until you saw the truth.

You left broken relationships in your wake, ignored the pain you caused others, grabbed whatever you wanted without caring who got hurt. These dead-end practices left your spirit dry and your enthusiasm for life empty. And you became selfish. Only Jesus could free you from this slavery. He did just that, by dying in your place.

Through him, you died to sin. Now you live for Christ. Grace doesn’t make sin okay; it makes you free to say “No” to doing wrong. You don’t ask, “How much can I get away with?” You ask, “How much can I help?”

The Depth We Descended

Paul wrote, “Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death...” (Rom. 6:3-4a).

When Jesus died, we who believe in him died, too. Baptism—going beneath the symbolic water—is God’s mark of ownership on us. In a spiritual sense, our baptism is our death. We drowned to the old life. Because you were baptized, you know you’re called into a better life.

So what’s a better way of life? A better life looks like forgiveness instead of revenge, patience instead of anger, and sacrifice instead of self-centeredness. A better life is trading the bitter taste of greedy living for the sweetness of loving others well.

Baptism is like becoming a citizen of a different country. You swear an oath, a pledge of allegiance, to your new country. You gain new rights and promise to fulfil new responsibilities. There’s no returning to your old country. You’re a new citizen with a new way of living.

Remember your baptism. The clean scent of water washing over you. Baptism means you descended into the depths, you died to sin’s influence. And you’re liberated by Jesus Christ. You’re alive again in him.

The Direction You Now Walk

Paul continued: “...we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

In Christ, you’re raised to new life. You’re powered by the same force that raised Jesus from the grave.

Notice Paul’s word choice: we *walk* in newness of life. Walking implies ongoing movement, steady progress, daily steps. This isn’t a one-time spiritual high. It’s a lifelong journey. Step by step, you follow a trail of restored relationships, encouraged hearts, and lives made better by your presence.

You walk in a whole new direction. Your old behaviors shift to actions and words that bless others. You have a newness of life. When a person needs help, you’re first in

line to help. You leave mended relationships in your wake; you bring hope and purpose to others. You grab whatever you can that blesses them. You don't put yourself first anymore, because in Christ you're a new, selfless person.

YOUR GIFT CARD IS NEVER EMPTY AGAIN. God's grace fills it with forgiveness, and now it's loaded with power for a new life, one spent blessing others instead of serving yourself.

Now you have nothing to forgive, and everything to praise.

Thanks be to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Amen

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