

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, WA
July 20, 2014**

Romans 6:1-11

BURIED!

- 1. Buried into Christ's death**
- 2. Buried to daily rise and live**

**Hymns: *Gathering Rite on Holy Baptism* – 297 –
Distribution: 294, 309 – Closing: 185**

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

Romans 6:1-11 –

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 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.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Do you want to be buried?

That's not a very appealing question, is it? "Buried" is not a positive, uplifting word at all. Up north at Oso, WA, this past winter we saw rather distressing scenes on the news as the Oso landslide occurred. Tons of mud and debris

buried a river, a highway, houses, and people who lived there. In the end, a square mile of mud buried 49 homes in a rural neighborhood. 42 people were killed. Mud buried the old landscape anywhere from 30 to 70 feet deep. It was a destructive, distressing scene.

As we continue our look at key words from the New Testament book of Romans, today we come to the word "buried." It's not a word similar to ones we have already had in this series. We've rejoiced in the past weeks at the words we've seen. But can we rejoice as we learn today how we have been "buried?"

Today we will focus on that word as we study Romans 6, and we are going to rejoice that God shows us this picture, which describes our status before him and our life. Specifically, Scripture is going to teach us that Holy Baptism is a key connection to the blessed picture of burial that we have undergone! **Today we will learn that we have been:**

- 1. Buried into Christ's death**
- 2. Buried to daily rise and live**

1. Buried into Christ's death

Romans 6 says, "*Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried with him through baptism into death... Our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*"

The distressing news that we hear at the beginning of our reading is that we have a wretched, old master. We were born with this master over us. This master, called our "Old Self," dominated us. It plagued and prevented us from doing what God's children should want to do. The Old Self is selfish. It loves trying to find pleasure in sin. It enjoys rebelling against God's good rules for living. It controls sinful impulses. It acts quickly. And it leads us to hell. It is called the "body of death." And Paul candidly tells us that we were slaves to the old master, our sinful flesh. The worst news about this enemy of ours is not that it has "invaded us" or "taken us over." The worst news is that it IS us! Our own sinful nature is our worst enemy.

However, then we were buried! Some churches claim that the word “bury” in these verses is referring to the method that baptism’s waters are to be applied, that is, saying that a person must be immersed (buried) in the waters. It is not wrong to baptize by immersion, but this is not the point of these verses at all. Romans 6 is teaching us what happens spiritually as a person is baptized. Holy Baptism connects them to Christ’s death. Paul says it quite clearly:

- *“We were baptized into his death”*
- *“We have been united with him in his death”*
- *“Our old self was crucified with him”*
- *“The body of sin was done away with”*

At a baptism, a funeral takes place. Our Old Self suffered and died a criminal’s death, because baptism connects us to the suffering and death of Jesus. Our natural birth connected us with Adam, the first sinner and the father of us all. Our spiritual birth in baptism unites us with the cross where Jesus died. There our sins and our sinful nature was buried. In Acts 2 Peter preached, *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the forgiveness of your sins.”* When the Apostle Paul was converted from Saul to Paul, the prophet Ananias told him, *“Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins.”* That’s why Martin Luther’s second explanation to Holy Baptism in the Catechism states, **“Baptism works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this.”** We were buried into Christ’s death at baptism!

What joy this brings us. Perhaps some of you have tuned in to see the show called “The Biggest Loser” in the past. On this show, people who are overweight and obese are given coaches and resources to help them lose as much weight as possible. The contestant who loses the biggest percentage of body weight over a number of months wins a million dollars. Pictured here is Helen Phillips, a past winner before her season of competition began. She weighed 257 lbs. Over the course of six months, Helen was able to lose 54% of her body weight and won the show at 117 lbs. What joy that brought her! In fact, many of the contestants talk about the “old me” and remark how they have “buried” that old person that they once were.

As we think about the burial that God has worked in our life – burying our sinful nature and our sins in Holy Baptism – what joy that brings us! A new person has arisen. And Satan has lost. All because a person is buried into Christ’s death.

2. Buried to daily rise and live

But there’s more. There’s much more, because Paul has much to say about what happens after the burial into Christ’s death. After all, Christ didn’t stay in the tomb. And neither do we. Romans 6 also says, *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?... Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”*

We follow the pattern of Christ. Christ suffered and died for the sins of the world, and then was raised to life on the third day. He did not stay in the tomb, but was victoriously resurrected. After he rose from the dead, what rule did sin hold over him? What fear of death did he have to face after that? None at all! For he was glorified and prepared to return to his Father’s right hand in heaven.

Holy Baptism connects us to this aspect of Christ’s work also. Spiritually, since we are buried we follow the same pattern. We must realize that we do not die and rise to earn our salvation, as Christ did. We are not our own Saviors. But because we are intimately connected with his death and resurrection through baptism, we have a new life also. Galatians 3 says, *“All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”* We have “put on” Christ to live for him. In fact, we only have the strength to live a new life because he lives in us and motivates us. This connection to Christ gives us the desire to put away sins and live for him. The

verses immediately after our sermon text say it well: *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master.”*

Going back to Helen Phillip’s example in her physical body, life cannot be like it was before. Her days must now include healthy eating and regular exercise. Her life must be different from what it used to be.

We could sum up the new life that Christians live with a motto. People have devised mottos to live by, after all. Perhaps you’ve heard people say, “Carpe diem!” “Seize the day!” The point of that is to take hold of the moment and go for it. Or some would say, “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we may die.” A Christian follows this motto: “Live like you’re dead.” That almost sounds like a contradictory statement. “Live like you’re dead.” But that motto encourages us to remember that we have been buried to rise daily with Christ to live a new life of holiness.

We could say that we are “dead to the world.” Some of you might be dead to the world in the morning when your spouse or mom is trying to get you out of bed. All of us are to be dead to the world when it comes to the behavior and temptations of the world around us. This is why Martin Luther’s fourth explanation to Holy Baptism says, **“Baptism means that the Old Adam in us should be drowned by daily contrition and repentance and that a new man should arise daily to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.”**

Therefore, what effect will this have on your life? After all, it seems that some changes need to be made from the “old you.”

- Your marriage – What changes do you need to make to your behavior and attitude to make your marriage a God-pleasing relationship?
- Are you a child? How do you need to change, to be a submissive and obedient child in your household?
- A student – Are you going to be returning to the classroom this fall?

What kind of student would God have you be?

- Money – How does your attitude toward money and the material things of this world need to change from the “old you?”
- Habits – Are there some that need to be drowned? What do you need to “lose” in your habits and routines to be the holy person that God has made you?
- And many more!

After all, you’ve been buried! Buried to daily rise to a new life under God in righteousness and holiness.

Before we close, we should recognize an important fact. Many people in our world think that all Christian churches are basically the same. Many people don’t realize where differences in teachings exist. Today we see a clear example in our modern-day world. The majority of Christian churches in our day and age (which can be characterized as Reformed churches) do not believe what we have learned today from Scripture about Holy Baptism. They would say:

- “It’s just water”
- “Baptism is not for salvation”
- “Baptism is mainly about your act of obedience”
- “Baptism signifies that you have chosen Christ”
- “Baptism is to confirm faith”
- “Baptism is to mark your commitment to Christ”
- “Infants don’t know what sin is, so we don’t baptize them”
- “Dedicating a child is as effective as baptism”

Don’t believe it for a minute. In baptism, God acts. Infant, child, or adult, **that person has been buried.**

- 1. They have been buried into Christ’s death**
- 2. They have been buried to rise daily and live**

May we thank God today and every day for this BURIAL! Amen.