

WHY WALK WORTHY OF GOD? BECAUSE OF YOUR POSITION IN CHRIST!

INTRO

Last week we noted in Thessalonians 2 that Paul “exhorted and comforted and charged” the Thessalonian believers—“as a father doth his children...to **walk worthy of God.**” What does it mean to walk worthy of God? Here’s what it does **not** mean: It does not mean we live our life in such a way that God deems us worthy entrants into heaven. We are never **worthy** of heaven—and never can be—but we **can gain** entrance because of the forgiveness, grace, and mercy God offers us through Jesus’ death for our sins. “Walking worthy” means to walk in a way that the Lord deserves based on who **He is** and what **He has done**. It is not to make us worthy—it is because HE **is** worthy.

Paul did not just exhort and urge and insist that the Thessalonian believers walk worthy of God—he also **showed** them how. His example—of which he called on both them and God as witnesses—was that he behaved holily, and justly, and unblameably among them. He was not perfect—but he was consistent in character and faithful in his duties just as we should be. In addition to being an example and exhorting them, he also provided a reason **why** they should walk worthy of God—because God had called them unto His kingdom and glory. Because they belonged to God, they represented God and should live a life that would bring honor—not shame—to His name.

Text: Romans 6:1-11

Title of my message this morning: “Walking Worthy of God Because of Your Position in Christ!”

1. Rebuke against Presumption to sin (vss 1-2)

A. Rationale to sin more

Romans 5:20 “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” ‘Might just as well live it up—and sin it up—so you get more grace’ is the attitude of some. Are there people that think that way? There certainly are—that’s why the all-knowing God anticipated the question and has it in the Bible!

Not us, though—we are more sophisticated than that. Instead, we fall into this habit of thinking: ‘Since I’ll never be perfect **this** side of heaven, I’m **not** going to take this “avoidance-of-sin-thing” too seriously. After all, ‘once saved, always safe’ so why lament for the sins that Jesus already died and paid for?’ Is that how God wants us to think? Does He want us to be a “live it up” kind of person to gain more grace? Does He want us to be a “give up” kind of person because we can’t not sin so why worry about it? Not hardly!

B. Rebuke to the suggestion (v 2a)

Notice Paul’s response in verse 2: “God forbid.” It is much stronger than ‘that’s not a good idea;’ it’s more like “Heaven forbid” or “perish the thought” or “may it never be!” Another way to think of it is “let not this by any means be supposed” (or imagined). It is one of the strongest forms of rebuke in the Greek language.

C. Reason to sin less

God through Paul not only forbids the idea—He tells us **why** in the second half of verse 2: “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Life and death are not compatible because they are polar opposites. “Life **in** sin cannot coexist with death **to** sin” (F.F. Bruce; 128). If you are dead to something—if it has no hold over you and no influence over you—how can you live in it and be controlled by it?

Some of you are thinking—and rightly so—‘Wait a minute, Pastor; I’m not dead to sin! In fact, I am affected by it every day! Since that is true—you know it and I know it—how can you say I am dead to sin?’

Illustration: I was in the military full-time for 24 years. My jobs varied throughout that time, but there were certain requirements that were constant. I had to address people a certain way. I had to shave every day and have a certain kind of haircut. Whenever I went to work I had to wear a uniform and whenever I went outside while wearing a uniform I had to wear some kind of headgear. I could not put my hands in my pocket unless it was to get something out. I had to button every pocket that had buttons and couldn't have boot laces hanging any which way. I was under the rules of the military and over one pocket was my name; over the other was U.S. Army. After you have been in for awhile, you realize that U.S. Army stands for Uncle Sam Ain't Released Me Yet!

And then came April 1st, 2009 and I was released! I got up that morning and went to the same office to work with the same people doing nearly the same job—only now as a civilian contractor—and a military retiree! I didn't shave, nor did I put on a uniform. I didn't wear a hat when I went outside and I walked around with my hands in my pockets. Although I was obviously very much alive—I was “dead” to the Army. It had no authority over me and I was not obligated to obey its rules and regulations.

As Christians, God declares we are dead to sin—it is no longer our master; it's authority over us has been broken. How does that work...and how is it so?

Because of the....

2. Reality of our Position in Christ (vss 3-8)

A. We are counted as being dead with Christ (vss 3-8)

i. Seen in the pronouncements

Note how many times in this passage God pronounces that we are counted as being dead with Christ.

Vs 3: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized **into His death?**”

(Will talk about baptism more in a minute; for now I just want you to notice our death with Christ)

Vs 4: “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism **into death**”

Vs 5: “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of **His death...**”

Vs 6: “Knowing this, that our old man is **crucified with Him...**”

Vs 8: “Now if we be **dead with Christ...**”

Five times in these six verses God pronounces us as being *in Christ* and having died *with Christ* when He died. Just like any declaration God makes, it is true whether we *feel* it is true or *think* it is true. God said it and that settles it—whether we believe it or not!

Our position in Christ—God counting us as being *in Christ*—is not only pronounced, it is also pictured.

ii. Seen in the pictures

Picture of baptism (vss 3-5). The immediate question that comes to mind is what **kind** of baptism—spiritual baptism or water baptism? The answer? Yes! It is one—or the other—or possibly both! First, what does baptize mean? The word *baptize* means to dip or to immerse. In ancient Greek writings, it was used of an iron smith who dipped a piece of hot iron in water to temper it. Notice this “dipping” idea in verses on your sheet:

Matthew 3:16 “And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water...” It doesn't say Jesus had water sprinkled on Him, but it does say He came out of the water.

Acts 8:38-39 “And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went **down both into the water**, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were **come up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”

In both instances we see baptism as immersion—a submersion, if you will—that involved going under the water and coming back out. This is known as **water** baptism and is also called “believer's baptism.”

Jesus commanded it (Matthew 28:19) and it always came after an individual trusted Christ as their personal Savior—never before.

Acts 2:41 “Then they that gladly received his word [the words of Peter’s sermon] were baptized...” There is not one instance in the Bible where an infant was baptized and if you think about it, that makes perfect sense. An infant can’t understand that they have sinned against God, an infant can’t understand that there are consequences for sin, and an infant can’t understand the concepts of repentance, forgiveness, and faith. So what happens to them? Although they are little sinners, because they are mentally unable to accept—or reject—Christ’s offer of salvation, God in His mercy saves them.

Is **water** baptism the picture that Paul paints for us here? Many argue that it is. Notice verse 4: “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life.” Baptism is a perfect picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Going **under the water** pictures both the death and burial of Christ—you don’t bury someone who is alive—and **coming up out** of the water is a wonderful picture of Christ coming out of the grave.

In I Corinthians 10, we see Paul using baptism in a slightly different way.

I Corinthians 10:1-3 “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all **baptized** unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat;”

Here’s another way the Bible uses the word baptism: “the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with someone else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition” (J Phillips, 101). That is how the word is being used here.

I Corinthians 12:13 “For by one Spirit are we all **baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

There is no reference to water here and instead of one person immersing another into **water**, the Holy Spirit is “immersing” the believer into the body of Christ. When does that happen? The instant a person is saved, the Holy Spirit places you into the body of Christ—also known as the universal church. You were united with Christ...**and** united with all other true believers.

Is this baptism pictured in Romans 6? I believe it is. Notice verse 4—“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

If only water baptism is meant, it would mean this: If you have been baptized in **water**, you are considered buried with Christ and should walk in a newness of life. If you have **not** been baptized in water, however, you are **not** considered buried with Christ and consequently do not have to walk in the newness of life. Is that how God operates? Does He have a special “elite” status within His family—those who have been baptized in water and those who have not? By the way, being water baptized is something that we **do**! Does God ever want us to glory in what **we** do?

If it means **spirit** baptism, however, then all true believers are considered as having died with Christ and it is dependent on what God has done—not on us. Is that not more like how God does things?

This concept of being united with Christ is also seen in a second picture Paul paints for us, the Picture of crucifixion (v 6)

Vs 6: “Knowing this, that our old man is **crucified with Him**...”

Who—or what—is the “old man?” The expression “old man” also occurs in Ephesians 4:22 and Colossians 3:9; W.E. Vine defines it as “the man of the old, corrupt human nature, the inborn tendency to evil in all men” (J Phillips; Romans; 103). In other words, it is the person we were before we were saved.

When did Christ die (not a trick question)? Christ died 2000 plus years ago and God declares that you and I as believers *died with Him*. Isn't that what verse 8 says: “Now if [since] we be dead with Christ...” Notice your sheet a couple more verses that pronounce us as being dead with Christ:

Gal 2:20 “I am **crucified with Christ**: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

Col 3:2-3 “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are **dead**, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

God considers us dead in Christ—that's why “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature/creation!” Not only are you and I as believers are counted as having died with Christ, notice next...

B. We will also be resurrected with Christ (vss 5, 8)

Vs 5b “...we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection”

Vs 8b “...we believe that we shall also live with Him:”

3. Response because of our Position in Christ (vss 3-8)

So how should this truth impact our lives? What difference does it make that God counts us as being in Christ and considers us as having died with Him? To again quote Vine: “*Positionally*, in the reckoning of God, the old man is crucified, and the believer is exhorted to make this good in *experience*, reckoning it to be so by definitely ‘putting off’ the old man and ‘putting on’ the new.”

A. Don't serve sin (vss 2, 6, 7)

Vs 7: “For he that is dead is freed from sin.” You died with Christ—God counts you as dead—and “the body of sin”—the power of your sin nature—has been destroyed. It has not been annihilated, but it has been rendered as inoperative and powerless by God so don't allow it to be your master.

B. Walk in a newness of life (v 4)

Vs 4 (last part): “...even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Just like Jesus was raised up from the dead, we should walk in newness of life. We should be different—not the same—as before we were saved.

C. Live unto God (v 10)

Vs 10: “...but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”

Walk worthy—live your life to please Him—not to gain favor, but because He is worthy.

D. Rejoice in God counting us as in Christ (Romans 7:18-25)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

1. Are you rejoicing in the fact that God counts you as being in Christ? What a wonderful truth that ought to bring joy to us—and praise and thanksgiving to God.

2. Second, what is your attitude toward sin? God wants us to walk in newness of life and has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Sin is no longer our master—we are freed from it and need to start living like it.

3. Are you in Christ? Have you been born again? None of these things are true of you if you are not a child of God....