

Grace That Changes Everything
Dying and Rising with Christ: Romans 6:1b–11
Sunday, June 21, 2026

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Throughout this month, we have reflected on the theme, **Grace That Changes Everything**. Grace is not simply God's kindness toward us. Grace changes how we trust, how we understand ourselves, how we serve, how we follow Him, and ultimately how we live. It changes not only what we believe but also who we become.

Today, Paul reminds us that grace is not merely forgiveness for the past; it is power for a new life.

Paul asks a startling question: *"Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?"* (Romans 6:1) His answer is immediate and emphatic: **"By no means!"**

Why? Because through baptism we have died with Christ and risen with Him. Grace changes not only our status before God; it changes the direction of our lives. In this passage, Paul provides a framework for understanding the new life we have received in Christ.

Through Baptism We Die with Christ

To understand this, think about the Apostle Paul himself.

Before he met Christ, he was Saul—the persecutor of Christians. He approved of Stephen's death, imprisoned believers, and authorized threats against the church.

Then Jesus met him on the road to Damascus. Everything changed.

Paul came to understand that when Christ died, the old Saul died with Him.

He writes: *"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death"* (Romans 6:4).

The old life died, the old identity died, and the old master lost its authority. You are no longer defined by your past failures, your worst decisions, or the sins that once controlled you.

In Christ, the old self has been crucified.

This is good news for all of us. Some carry regrets, others carry shame, and some still hear the voices of past mistakes. But baptism declares that our past no longer has the final word. Christ does.

But death is not where God leaves us. If we have died with Christ, what kind of life rises from the waters of baptism?

That brings us to Paul's second framework.

Through Baptism We Rise with Christ

Paul did not simply stop persecuting Christians; he lived a new life with Christ. The man who once destroyed the church became its servant, the one who spread fear became an ambassador of hope, and the one who trusted in his own righteousness learned to depend entirely upon Christ.

Yet Paul would be the first to tell us that this new life was not easy.

He struggled, suffered, faced temptations, carried burdens, and asked fellow Christians to pray for him.

He continually sought God's strength, refused to submit himself again to the old lifestyle of sin, pressed on, persevered, and fought the good fight. And he won—not because he was strong in himself, but because of the victorious power of Christ living in him.

Paul declares: *"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his"* (Romans 6:5).

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead now works in us. Grace not only forgives us. Grace empowers us. And that raises an important question: **What does resurrection life actually look like in everyday life?**

New Identity Leads to New Living

Let me share something personal. Someone close to me—actually, more than a friend; she is like a sister to me—once asked, "Have you ever dated an American woman?"

I answered, "No." Not because I do not admire them, because I do; not because I have never been tempted, because I have; and certainly not because I think I am stronger than others, because I am not.

The truth is that when Christ called me into His ministry, I received a new identity and a new responsibility. I committed myself to a life shaped by different values and expectations, and I have to live within that framework.

That does not make me perfect. I do not deserve to be held up as a role model. I know my own weaknesses, carry my own baggage, and left to myself, I am capable of failure.

So I have learned to be careful, so that I do not become vulnerable to the patterns of the old life.

I pray that God protects me from evil because the power belongs to Him. I ask friends and prayer partners to pray for me, and I invite others to fight alongside me in battles I cannot win alone.

That is exactly what Paul is teaching us. The Christian life is not pretending that temptation no longer exists. It is recognizing that because we belong to Christ, we do not have to surrender to it. Paul says: *"So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 6:11).

Equally important is what Paul never claims. He does not suggest that temptation goes away.

The devil still brings the old sins back in different forms, different sizes, and different colors. Sometimes temptation looks attractive, sometimes it appears harmless, and sometimes it whispers, "Just this once."

But those old sins belong to the old life that died with Christ. Why return to a grave that Christ has already emptied? Why submit to a master who no longer owns you?

We are called by grace to be followers of Jesus. The past no longer defines us, so do not dwell on the old life. Strive instead to live into the new identity you have received in Christ.

If you stumble, do not lose heart. Ask God for strength, pray honestly, ask your family to pray for you, and ask your fellow saints at Advent to stand with you. The Christian life was never meant to be lived alone.

And when you fall, get up again. Repent. Return to Christ again. Because your victory does not depend on the strength of your will; it depends on the power of Jesus Christ.

You will not overcome because you are strong enough. You will overcome because Christ has already overcome. His victory becomes your victory. His resurrection becomes your hope. His grace becomes your strength.

Challenge for the Week

This week, remember your baptism. Each morning, make the sign of the cross and say: **"I belong to Christ today."**

Then ask yourself: **"What old habit, old resentment, old fear, or old sin keeps trying to reclaim a place that belongs to Christ?"**

Bring it to God. Ask others to pray with you. Do not fight alone.

Remember: You are not trying to earn God's love. You already have it. You are not fighting for victory. You are fighting from victory.

So, my saints of Advent, go from this place remembering who you are. You have died with Christ. You have risen with Christ. You belong to Christ.

Do not return to the grave of the old life. Walk in the freedom of the new life He has given you.

When temptation comes, remember your baptism. When you grow weary, lean on the prayers of God's people. For the One who called you is faithful, and the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work within you even now.

Therefore, live as resurrection people. Live with hope, live with courage, live with gratitude, and live in the confidence that Christ has already won the victory.

And let the world see in you the transforming power of the One who died, rose again, and lives forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.