

Title: Starting Over

Text: Romans 6:4

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Do you remember what it was like when we were children growing up? Maybe you were playing a game, or singing a song, or reciting something at school and you messed up. Quickly we would say something like “let me start over” or “I need to start over” or maybe we would just shout out that universal phrase “do over!”

Some things can easily be started again. Often I find myself working on sermon notes that just are not cutting it and require a do over but how do you start over on a bad haircut? Does anybody like to hear their surgeon during a surgery say, “I need to start over?”

How about your life? Can you go back and redo your High School years? Oh, sure, you can get a GED or an equivalent diploma but can you erase damaged relationships or cover up mistakes of judgment or redo events that have led to criminal violations? Not likely!

So what do we mean in Christianity when preachers, teachers, and other believers in Christ talk about a new life?

Romans 6:4

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.

I. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.

Because of the nature of our union with Christ, expressed in baptism, it follows, that those who are baptized are buried with Christ; they are as effectually shut out from the kingdom of Satan, as those who are in the grave are shut out from the world.

A. We are cut off from the world in and with him.

Colossians 2:12

Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

What is he talking about?

Look at verse 8 and verse 5 from Romans 6...

Romans 6:8

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Romans 6:5

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

B. But this is not a treatise on the mode of baptism.

1. The next verse talks about being planted with him.
2. The reference is not to the mode of baptism, but to its effect.
3. Our baptism unites us to Christ, so that we died with him, and rose with him.
4. As he died to sin, so do we.
5. As he rose to righteousness and glory, so do we.

Galatians 3:27

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

* The “Voyage of the Dawn Treader” is novel written by the theologian, C. S. Lewis. One of characters in his story is a young boy from England, Eustace Scrubb, experiencing his first contact with Narnia.

At the second island they visit while on a quest with King Caspian, Eustace leaves the group to avoid participating in the

work needed to render the ship seaworthy after a storm has damaged it. He hides in a dead dragon's cave to escape a sudden downpour. The dragon's treasure arouses his greed: he fills his pockets with gold and jewels and puts on a large golden bracelet; but as he sleeps, he is transformed into a dragon.

As a dragon, he becomes aware of how bad his previous behavior was, and uses his strength to help make amends. After a series of adventures Aslan, the lion, the Christ figure in this story, turns Eustace back into a boy, and as a result of his experiences Eustace is now a much nicer person.

The point...the point is that Eustace makes some pitiful and dangerous choices that would have ruined his life if not for the intervention of Aslan. The same can be said of us!

II. Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

- A. We die with Christ, in order that we should live with him.
 - a. Justification leads us to sanctification.
 - b. There can be no participation in Christ's life without a participation in his death, and we cannot enjoy the benefits of his death unless we are partakers of the power of his life.
 - c. We must be reconciled to God in order to be holy, and we cannot be reconciled without thereby becoming holy.

* To believe that the benefits of the salvation can be enjoyed without experiencing the renewing of the Holy Spirit is therefore contrary to the very nature and design of redemption. As Christ's resurrection was the certain consequence of his death, so is a holy life the certain consequence of our dying with Christ.

What?

To truly be saved it is a requirement of God that his Spirit dwell in our hearts. We often ask our children, “does Jesus live in your heart?”

We expect them to answer yes.
Is it any different for us?

Does Jesus live in your heart?

I’m not asking if you said a prayer, answered some churchy questions, or knelt down at an altar to pray. I’m asking, “does Jesus live in your heart?”

*Following Jesus’ resurrection from the tomb, Jesus spent time with his disciples. It was a time of teaching, encouragement, and blessing. Then came the day when he stood with them on the hillside and he told them...

Acts 1:4-5

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. [5] For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Do you understand? Jesus was an awesome influence! He was the power in their lives but he was limited by his physical presence. For the Church to become all that God intended it was necessary for Jesus to ascend into the heavens and to take his place alongside the Father.

For us to experience God in a broader way, in a more powerful mode, on a consistent basis the disciples were required to...

- Stay
- Wait

- Be filled with the coming Holy Spirit
- Receive God's power
- Become God's witnesses to the world

B. To live with God requires that his Spirit dwell within us.

* Every once in a while I will have someone come to me for marriage counseling. They will begin their story by telling me that they are separated and then seek to explain how that happened.

Marriage is more than a signature on a document. Just because it is recorded in a court file does not present a fair picture of marriage.

Marriage requires an intimacy that cannot be satisfied long distance.

How can you claim to be a Christian when the Spirit of God, the third part of the Trinity, the counselor, the presence of Jesus to the world does not reside in you? A lack of a Holy Spirit presence is evidence that Jesus does not dwell here.

If Jesus does not dwell here, then there is no new life to be experienced.

Are you following me? Does this make sense?

We want to leave behind us a life of sin. We want to know God's love. We want to experience His presence. We want to die to sin and experience new life in Christ.

You may invite Jesus in, but if you fail to allow God's Spirit to dwell within, you have missed the point. Salvation begins with forgiveness, belief, and faith but it lasts because the Almighty God, from the reaches of eternity, extends his touch to this planet, this country, this state, this county, this city, and this place. He touches our hearts with his Spirit and makes us a Holy People set aside for the glory.

Conclusion: You will never truly know "life" without the experience of...

Acts 2:1-4a

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. [2] Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3] They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. [4] All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit ...

The filling presence of God's spirit was not the result of an "upper room," or even the exact number gathered there. The Holy Spirit came to a group of people because they had understood what Jesus taught.

They would never be more than a group of nice people, seeking to do nice things in a nasty world until they decided to believe what Jesus had taught them, determined that they would do exactly what Jesus asked of them, and that they would wait on God to do what He said He would do!

There was a starting over. Have you known this filling of the Holy Spirit? Have you been touched with the "shekinah" glory of God? Does the divine majesty of God dwell in your heart? Would you like that to happen?

We should walk in newness of life. I'm talking about—a *new* heart, a *new* creature, the *new* man. Newness of life is a life that is new, compared with what is natural and original; and it is a holy life, springing from a new source. It is not we that live, but Christ that lives in us; and therefore our life is, in its manifestations, comparable to his. His people are like him.