

Sermon Notes

What does salvation in Christ mean for the life we live here and now? Grace has overcome death and sin. But why do they still seem to have power? We are a new creation. But why does it so often feel differently? Paul's opponents add another question: Should we now "keep on sinning so God can keep on forgiving?" (Romans 6:1 MSG) No way!

➤ Dead to Sin

Paul reminds us that we are baptised "into the death" of Jesus, which means 'baptised in the name of the one who died in our place once and for all and broken the dominion of sin'. We are now under his authority and therefore—already now!—"dead to sin" (6:11). We do not have to die to sin: Christ has done that already.

➤ Alive in Christ

Like a branch, grafted into a tree ("united" 6:5), so are we now living connected to and "in" Christ. Growing in faith does not mean getting stronger by ourselves, but letting Christ gain more room in us. 6:11 is the first command of the entire letter. And it does not call for "requirements" we would have to fulfil, but for a mindset we have all reason to adopt.

➤ Free to serve God

Instead of needing to be afraid of the next time we sin, we are free to serve God and should focus on that. We *were* slaves, but we are *not* anymore. Like tools in the hand of a master builder, so are we instruments in the hands of God. He is doing the work!

Questions for Discussion

- 1 Have you been in a situation in which you had to adopt a completely new, perhaps even unusual mindset, attitude or perspective?

Or have you ever experienced the challenge of growing into a new role in life or at work that you knew was the right place for you—only completely different to anything you have done before or any position or circumstance you have been in?
- 2 How do you relate to your baptism? Regardless of whether you can remember the concrete event of your baptism: do you feel encouraged by what your baptism actually *means*?
- 3 We do not have to die to sin: Christ has already done that. What then would it mean to grow as a believer?
- 4 We are not "slaves" to sin anymore, but the slave master sin is still very much around. Do Paul's words help you understand and face this tension?
- 5 What comes to your mind when you hear Paul's command to "present your members to God as instruments for righteousness"? (6:13) What could that look like if you think of next week?
- 6 As you pray, ask to have this new mindset strengthened in you through the Holy Spirit: you are dead to sin, alive in Christ and therefore free to serve God.