

38 - Being Made a Part of Each Other

by Ben Torrey

We become a part of each other through baptism and are nourished in our unity through the Lord's Supper, as we share in the blood and body of Christ and become one body.

Duration: 9:00

Scripture: Romans 5:12

Topics: "Body Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, Ben Torre discusses the importance of being joined together in the body of Christ and the special relationship that comes with it. He starts by explaining how death and sin entered the world through Adam, but salvation and life come through Christ. Torre emphasizes that baptism is not a magical solution to sin, but rather a spiritual reality that we must choose to appropriate. He highlights the significance of the communion of the Lord's Supper as a way to nurture and nourish our unity, citing passages from 1 Corinthians.

Transcript

Good evening, this is Ben Torrey once again. Tonight I would like to share some thoughts with you on how we are made a part of each other. Over the past few weeks I have been discussing what it means for us to be joined together in the body of Christ, in a special relationship with each other.

Tonight, however, I would like to take a step back and look at what the scriptures say about how we enter into and maintain this special relationship. Let's start with a passage from Romans. We will look at some verses in chapter 6, but first I would like to set the context for this passage.

In chapter 5, Paul writes about how death and sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and how the gift of life and salvation come to us through the sacrifice of Christ for sin. Christ is the second Adam, reversing the effect of the sin of the first Adam. He points out that grace, God's free gift to us, abounds all the more in comparison with the abundance of our sin.

This brings us to chapter 6. I will read verses 1 through 5. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be. How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become

united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.

Having just said how much the magnitude of our sin emphasizes the greatness of God's grace, Paul immediately deals with the obvious question that would arise. If the more we sin, the more grace there is, then shouldn't we keep on sinning so that there will be more and more grace? Of course not, he answers. We are now dead to sin and risen to new life in Christ.

To continue to sin will not cause grace to increase, but rather it denies that we have received grace and new life. It becomes in essence a mockery of Christ's death and resurrection. So how does this happen? He tells us in verses three through five that this happens through baptism.

All who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death. Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so too we might walk in newness of life. It is baptism that brings us into union with Jesus' death and resurrection.

As we go down into the water, we die spiritually, and as we come out of the water, we are raised up to new life. It is this then that joins us to Christ. In so doing, it also joins us to one another in his body.

Paul writes more about this in Ephesians 4, where he says in verses four and five, there is one body and one spirit, just as you are all called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. It is through baptism that we become one with our Lord in his body. In Colossians 2, 9 through 12, Paul says this, for in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form, and in him you have been made complete, and he is the head over all rule and authority.

And in him you are also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you are also raised up with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. Here and elsewhere, Paul shows clearly that baptism for the Christian is analogous to circumcision for the Israelite. In other words, just as circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Israel, and every male Israelite who took this sign to himself became an heir of God's promise, and brought that promise to all members of his household, so too we, when we are baptized, become heirs to God's new promise made through Christ to all who believe in him and obey him.

Through circumcision the person entered into the chosen people of Israel. In the same way, we who are baptized enter into the new Israel, the body of Christ. So we see from all this that we become members of the body of Christ, members of the fellowship, joined to Christ and to one another through the waters of baptism.

As members of Christ, we are to seek in all ways to be one with each other. We are to seek unity. Baptism is not a magic formula that changes our personality and forces us all of a sudden to no longer sin.

Paul in Romans 6 and 7 makes it very clear that these are spiritual realities that we may and must appropriate, but that God never violates our ability to choose what we do. He does enable us to live for him when we choose to do so. So what does God provide to us to help us live as one? You have heard over the weeks about all that we must do to be one, and how important for unity, humility, forgiveness, and so forth are.

We also have seen how God gives us his Holy Spirit to empower and enable us, but that is not all. There is one more very important thing that God has given us to nurture and nourish our unity. That is himself in the communion of the Lord's Supper.

Let us look at a couple of passages in First Corinthians. First we turn to chapter 11 verses 23 through 26. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, broke it and said, This is my body which is for you.

Do this as a remembrance for me. In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, as a remembrance for me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Here Paul reports how Jesus taught him about how he instituted the Lord's Supper. Jesus says it is his body and blood and we are to do it as a remembrance.

This means that it is a sign of God's covenant or promise in the same way that Noah's rainbow, circumcision, and the blood on the doors of the Israelites' houses at the time of the exodus were. These are not so much for us to remember the events, but for us to hold up to God to remind him of his promise. When we invoke the promise through the sign of the covenant, we are showing God that we claim his promise to us.

Jesus also tells us to do this often. Paul also shows us that this communion in the Lord's Supper nourishes our unity. 1 Corinthians 10, 16, and 17.

Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Here Paul makes it quite explicit that what we do when we have communion is to share in the blood and body of Christ, and as we share in the one loaf, we who are many are one body. So, we enter this body through baptism and are nourished in it, being made more and more an integral part of it, if you will, through communion.

The special thing about both these is that they are very real, objective things that we can do. Of course, our own faith is an integral part of this, but we don't have to worry about whether or not we have really done them, since it is easy to know and does not depend on how we feel about them. They are simple acts of obedience.

I trust that you are baptized into Christ's body and hope that you obey his command to share in the communion often. As we share in communion together, it really does help us grow together in all the ways God wants us to grow. Well, that's it for now.

Good night.

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