

O Lord Jesus Christ, into whose death we have been baptized: Grant that like as You were raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we may walk in newness of life; that having been planted in the likeness of Your death, we may be *found* also in the likeness of Your resurrection, for the glory of Your holy name. Amen. (*Parish Prayers, ed. Frank Colquhoun, p. 112*).

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

In Christ Jesus, who joins Himself to us with His gracious presence, preparing us for the mansions awaiting us to join Him living the full life in everlasting righteousness, dear fellow redeemed:

We breathe in - we breathe out. We go to sleep - we awaken. We work - we rest. We get dirty - we wash up. We laugh - we cry. We are happy - we are sad. We eat - we drink. We grow up - we grow old. There is a rhythm that runs throughout your days. These personal life rhythms have become second nature to you. You do not need to think about these things even many voluntary actions; they just naturally occur.

There is a rhythm to our Christian lives as well. But some Christians get bored with it and want to imagine lives that go beyond the unremarkable, the simple and mundane. Sinful imaginations dream up a status in this life that achieve enough righteousness, so that sin no longer is a concern in this life. But by rejecting such a rhythmic lifestyle, a Christian is in danger of being tricked by Satan to forsake the life to which our Lord has called us. Let us then review the beauty and security of our new lives in Christ by observing - **The Baptized Daily Rhythm of Life: Dying and Rising.**

I

One who shared in our status as a baptized one, the Apostle Paul, spoke of his daily life of struggle in this world. "I have the

desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members."

If Paul, perhaps the greatest Christian missionary of all time, described his daily experience in this life as a baptized follower of Christ in this way, what makes you think you can somehow live without this spiritual conflict waging within yourself? You retain that old sinful nature which still hates God, does not trust Him and desires to live as a willing servant of Satan and his kingdom.

However, even though the struggle between your old man and new man wage within you, you are not without hope. In our text the Apostle clearly teaches what our Lord has done for us. We read: "all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death". And "our old self was crucified with [Christ] in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin."

Elsewhere we read that you as a Christian are to "put to death ... what is earthly in you ... the deeds of the body." Luther refers to this by calling upon you to drown the old sinful nature in the waters of your baptism everyday through contrition and repentance. By acknowledging and confessing your sin daily, you recognize that nothing good dwells in your flesh and you keep doing the evil you by God's grace do not want to do.

In addition you may be tempted to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps and latch onto a new approach, which seems to promise success in finally putting that sinful nature to death permanently in this life. But all such plans come from the pit of hell and have potential of killing the new man of faith. Your Lord has not given you anything differently – your daily rhythm my fellow baptized will always include the dying of your old man of sin.

II

Do not despair, however, this rhythm also includes the daily rising of the new man of faith. For we also read: "We were buried therefore with [Jesus] by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him

in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His."

So our gracious Lord gives us hope as we cry out "who will deliver me from this body of death?" Christ, our risen Lord, empowers and motivates us daily to put on the new self as well. Everyday we get to put on "compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another ... and above all these we get to put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." As the Spirit works among us bringing Christ to us, we walk in the newness of life.

"So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." Your baptism was not a one-time event, having blessing only in that moment, but it is an ongoing blessing in your daily life. Keep this ever before you. Begin your day making the sign of the cross over yourself and repeat those gracious words spoken by our Lord placing His name on you – *"In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* In the midst of your daily struggle as your flesh is tempted to disobey, do it again and again. As you retire for the night and lay down your head to rest, do it again and rest in the peace of Christ. It is a great way to mark this blessed rhythm of your baptized life. Every evening you rehearse your last lying down awaiting the rising as God's dear children from your restfully secure tomb on the great morning of resurrection.

When we hear the words of our Gospel lesson today, which come from Jesus' sermon on the mount, we might be led to despair. We are confronted with the misdeeds of our flesh – our murderous acts of hatred against neighbor, allowing grudges to fester away dismissing the need to be reconciled with our neighbor; concluding that our many acts of unrighteousness will prevent us from ever entering the kingdom of heaven.

But do not despair, even though Jesus says your righteousness must exceed that of the most holy person you know, it sets you up to find that righteousness. It is not found in you, but in someone else who was righteous in your place.

So it was with Paul, as he observes to the Philippians: "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith – that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming

like Him in His death that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus made me His own."

My fellow baptized ones, Christ made you His own through holy Baptism. You now live - daily dying to your sin with Him and daily rising to live with Him. This is your truly blessed rhythm of life. Soon the old will be gone forever. "We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again" and on that final day of our resurrection we too will never die again. Amen.