

April 8, 2012 by Steve Brandon



# Dying and Living

## Romans 6:8-11

1. Dying with Christ (verse 8a).
2. Living with Christ (verses 8b-9)
3. The Death of Christ (verse 10a)
4. The Life of Christ (verse 10b)
5. Our Death (verse 11a)
6. Our Life (verse 11b)

This morning is Easter. Perhaps it is better called, "Resurrection Sunday." On this morning, we celebrate the rising of our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave. We have read about it. We have sung about it. We have prayed about it. And now, we have the opportunity to hear from God's word about it.

One of the questions that might easily be asked is this: What difference does it make? Jesus lived some 2,000 years ago. How in the world can His life make any difference to me today? Why would we gather here this morning to hear about a dead man raised from the dead? Is it cultural? We have plenty of things surrounding Easter that are cultural. We often say, "He is risen!" and then reply with, "He is risen, indeed!" Is it curiosity? Is it mere custom that we think about Jesus risen from the dead on a particular Sunday each spring? What difference does it make in our lives today?

Well, our text today gives us some answers. Our text today is found in the sixth chapter of Romans, verses 8-11.

Romans 6:8-11

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Did you notice that there is a lot of dying in these verses? "Death" or "died" or "dead" appears eight times in these four verses. But, did you notice also that there is a lot of living in these verses as well? "Life" or "live" or "alive" appears four times in these four verses. For this reason, I have entitled my message this morning, "dying and living." Indeed, this is the theme of these verses.

It talks about the death of Jesus. It talks about the resurrection Jesus. It talks about our death. It talks about our life with Jesus. In fact, it is right here that we see a connection between the death and resurrection of Jesus, some 2,000 years ago, and our death and possible resurrection as well.

My message has six points today. I'll go through them quickly. Here's my first point, ...

### 1. Dying with Christ (verse 8a).

You see it right there in the first half of verse 8. "If we have died with Christ." What a strange thought, "If we have died with Christ"? Last I checked, all of you are alive and breathing here this morning. So, what can this possibly mean?

It means that we have believed in Jesus. It means that we have been united with Jesus in His death; so much so that when He died, we died. We have died "with Christ."

Now, I know that this is foreign to our thought. How can this be that we, who are alive, have actually died. But, when you believe in Jesus, there is a very real sense where we are united with Him in every sense of the word.

Here's something that might help. This past Monday was the NCAA championship basketball game. The Kansas Jayhawks lost to the Kentucky Wildcats. I want for you to think about the Kansas cheerleaders. They had cheered for their team all year long. They went to every game of the tournament, winning five in a row! All that they had to do to win the championship was win one more game! But, alas, they lost.

And if you have ever watched an NCAA championship game, you know that toward the end of the game, they pan toward the cheerleaders, especially the losing cheerleaders. Because, they often shed a tear, because their team lost. The cameras show the cheerleaders, because it helps to bring the emotion into the game. Oh, they wanted to win the championship so badly. But, when it came down to the final moments, their hopes were dashed.

And now, I ask you, did these cheerleaders play the game? No. Then why are they crying? They themselves didn't lose the game. But, you know why they are crying. Because they are so united with their boys on the court that the loss of the game is their loss as well.

In a somewhat similar manner is the meaning of the first half of verse 8. We who believe in Christ are so united with Him that when we died when He died. We have so united with Him, that we feel the death of Jesus in our souls.

But, that's not the end of the story. Not only is it Dying with Christ (verse 8a). It is also, ...  
2. Living with Christ (verses 8b-9)

Romans 6:8

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Jesus isn't dead any longer. Oh, once He was upon the cross. And He once breathed His last. And He once was taken down from the cross. And He once was laid in the tomb. But, death could keep Him, but a few days. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead.

And when we unite with Him in His death, we also unite with Him in His life! This is the good news that we celebrate this Resurrection Sunday morning!

To understand what Paul is talking about here, let us go back to the championship game on Monday night. Let's think about the Kentucky cheerleaders. Their team won the game! When the game was over, they gave shouts of joy and delight! I'm sure they were jumping up and down for joy and hugging each other. Any tears that they had were tears of joy, because their team won! They were national champions! And they willingly joined in the victory!

But, think about it -- these cheerleaders didn't win the game. They merely cheered their boys on. They had no more to do with the victory than the Kansas cheerleaders had to do with the loss. But, they share in the joy because they are on the same team.

This is a bit like our union with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we believe in Him, we are united with Him. We are on His team, and we share in the victory.

Now, the great thing about resurrection Sunday is that we know that Jesus won the game! The outcome isn't in doubt, because the game has been played. Jesus lived on the earth; He was buried; and He was raised on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:4). That's why we believe in Jesus. That's why we believe in the story of Easter. That's why we celebrate the resurrection this morning.

Oh, listen church family. The outcome of Jesus isn't in doubt. He has already overcome death. He won! We know this. And that's what we see in verse 9, ...

Romans 6:9

knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

Our belief and trust in Jesus Christ isn't without knowledge. No, it's precisely the knowledge of His life that spurs us on!

Notice that three times in this single verse, Paul mentions death. And yet, the verse isn't filled with sorrow! Each of the mentions of death have to do with victory over death. Jesus has raised from the dead. He will never die again. Death is no longer master over Him.

As 1 Corinthians 15 says, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:54-56).

John Owen wrote a classic book entitled, "The Death of Death in the Death of Christ." That's what we see here in verse 9. Death has been defeated in the death of Christ. Christ won't ever die again.

And as we place our hope and trust in Jesus, we will join with Him in union with Him. And we join with Him in His life. That is what makes the Christian message so wonderful! Since we died with Him, we will also live with Him. And Jesus Christ is very much alive!

Let's move on to the third point, ...

3. The Death of Christ (verse 10a)

In verse 10 we see some details regarding the death of Jesus. Oh, not the physical experience of death, but the spiritual significance of His death. The death of Christ was for sins. Verse 10 says, ...

Romans 6:10

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all.

The death of Jesus wasn't some random, senseless, violent act. The death of Jesus wasn't without purpose. No, when Jesus died upon the cross, it was for a purpose. "He died to sin." That is, He bore the penalty of sin on the cross. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. ... He was raised according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). These verses interpret the death and resurrection of Christ for us. He died "for our sins." This is wonderfully explained in chapter 5, verses 6-8, ...

Romans 5:6-8

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man;

though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

This is good news for us here this morning. The death of Jesus wasn't a death for righteous people. No, the death of Jesus was for helpless sinners.

There are so many people who get this wrong. As I speak with people about their lives, they think that they need to clean up their act and then they will come to Christ. And then they will come to church. They feel as if God won't accept them until they cleanse themselves.

But, listen! It's the other way around. Christ died for us when we were helpless (5:6). Christ died for us when we were ungodly (5:6). Christ died for us when we were sinners (5:8). And that's how we come to Jesus. We come as helpless, ungodly sinners!

Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come. [\[1\]](#)

And when we come to Jesus, the transaction takes place -- our sin upon His shoulders; His righteousness given to us. "[God] made [Jesus], who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). This was the death of Christ. It was for a purpose. It was to pay the penalty for our sins.

Notice the finality of His death. Verse 10 says, "For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all." His death doesn't have to be repeated. When Jesus died upon the cross, it was finished.

Again, we can go back to Monday night. When the game finished, the championship trophy was given to the team. They were crowned champions! They don't have to come back in 2013 to prove themselves all over again. No, they won the championship in 2012. It's over. It's done. They don't have to play again. They are the 2012 champions.

In a similar manner, the death of Jesus occurred once, never needing to be repeated again. Because Jesus died, "once for all." In fact, it says in Romans 8:3 that "Jesus condemned sin." That is, He pronounced the verdict against sin! It was done away with at the cross. It never needs repeating. His death accomplished our redemption.

Let's go back again to verse 10. We have seen The Death of Christ (verse 10a). Let's focus our attention now upon ...

#### 4. The Life of Christ (verse 10b)

Romans 6:10

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

When Jesus came to this earth, He died to sin. But after being raised from death, He lives to God. First of all, it means that Jesus Christ is alive and well today. Death could not keep Him in the grave. The stone was rolled away. Jesus appeared to many, alive and well.

In fact, we are told in 1 Corinthians 15 that Jesus appeared to more than 500 people on one occasion after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:6). This is a fact that people who doubt the resurrection have to deal with. There are many people who say, "Jesus didn't raise from the dead." There are many reasons given for why they don't think so. They either say that it was a hoax, or that the disciples were confused when they claim to have seen Jesus. Perhaps one of the biggest is that they have never seen anyone rise from the dead.

I love what John Starke tweeted this past week: "You may have never seen someone resurrect from the dead. But I've never seen people hallucinate in groups of 500 either." [\[2\]](#)

I'm here this morning to tell you that Jesus is alive and well today. But, notice something else about the life of Christ today. It is godward. "The life that He lives, He lives to God" (verse 10b).

In some measure, this brings up His current ministry as our great high priest. He prays for us. This is a major theme in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 7:25 tells us, "[Jesus] is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." In 1 John 2:1, Jesus is called our "Advocate with the Father." And in Romans 8:26, we see that "The Spirit Himself intercedes for us."

This is the reality of the life of Jesus Christ. He is right now pleading our cause before the Father. In other words, it's not that there is a dusty legal book upon the shelf someplace that God the Father needs to open to remind Himself about the work of Jesus. No, Jesus Christ is there, alive before the Father, pleading our case for us. And our case is really His case. Jesus died in our place. He was our substitute. And He continues to bring that fact before His heavenly Father on our behalf.

"The life that He lives, He lives to God" (verse 10b). But, more than merely praying, I believe that there is a purity in these words as well. There is a contrast in verse 10. It is dying to the awfulness of sin. It is alive to the realities of God. Dead to the devastation and death that sin brings; alive to the joy and life that God brings.

This is a great transition to my final two points. First, ...

#### 5. Our Death (verse 11a)

This is where my text gets really practical this morning. This is where the death of Jesus 2,000 years ago has a direct impact upon our lives today. Verse 11,...

Romans 6:11

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

This, by the way, is the first command given in the book of Romans. Until this point, Paul is building his argument. In the two and a half chapters, he describes our sin, ...

Romans 3:10-12

There is none righteous, not even one;

There is none who understands,

There is none who seeks for God;

All have turned aside, together they have become useless;

There is none who does good,

There is not even one

Romans 3:23

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

And then, in the next two and a half chapters, Paul describes how we can be justified before God. "We are justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). And, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

And then, beginning in chapter 6, Paul begins to set forth our sanctification -- that is, how we should live! And to tell us how to live, he first rehearsed the death and life of Jesus. Then, he tells us to follow in His steps. He tells us to imitate the life of Christ.

Look at the connection between verses 9 and 10. Verse 9 tells us that Jesus "died to sin" and that "He lives to God." Verse 10 tells us to follow the same route, "Consider yourself to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Jesus died to sin, but is now alive to God. So also are we to die to sin and live to God.

So, let's take these one by one. First of all, Our Death (verse 11a). "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin."

Think about it. When sin and temptation come your way, think about it. Think hard about it. Think that you are dead to that sin. "Jesus died for sins like these. Since I died with Jesus, these are the sorts of sins that I have died to as well. I can't live in these sins. 'How shall we who died to sin still live in it?' (verse 2). It doesn't make any sense for me to live in these sins. I'm dead to that."

When you think that way, God will give you the strength to overcome your temptation and walk in the ways of righteousness. And our life works in the same way. This is my final point, ...

6. Our Life (verse 11b)

So, think about it. When sin and temptation comes your way, think about it. Think hard about it. Think about how you are alive to God. "At this moment, Jesus lives to God (verse 10). And I too, will someday live to God as well (verse 8). Jesus isn't tempted by these things. I must not be tempted by them either. I am alive to God. I can't live in these sins."

And, again, when you think in this way, God will give you the strength to overcome your temptation, and walk in the ways of righteousness.

So, what about you? Are these things a reality in your life? Have you died? Have you taken up your cross? Are you alive?

I watched a clip recently about a documentary that is premiering this month. It showcases the lives of those in a nursing home. This particular clip focuses on "Henry". Henry is not responsive, and suffers from dementia. He is shriveled, and quiet normally doesn't communicate well. The documentary shows the nursing home staff giving Henry an iPod with his favorite music, and putting headphones on his ears. He woke right up! His eyes got wide, and he began to sway and sing along to the music!

It was as if life was put in him. Others were able to talk to him, and he spoke clearly. He lit up. The documentary is called "Alive Inside". That is what Henry was experiencing. He was experiencing life inside! [\[3\]](#)

My question to you is, "Are you lit up?" Is there something about God's Word that when you hear it, you light up? Are you joined with Jesus and His joy? Right now, Jesus is the happiest person in the universe (along with God the Father). He is risen! Are you joined with Jesus in His joy of victory over death? Do you understand that if you believe in Him and turn from your sins, that your sins are then gone and you are raised with Christ and you can share in His joy?

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on April 8, 2012 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] "Just As I Am, Without One Plea", Words by Charlotte Elliott.

[2] <http://headhearthand.org/blog/2012/04/07/tweets-of-the-day/>

[3] You can watch the video about Henry [here](#). There are a few other clips and trailers on the documentary's website [here](#).