

Theme: DEAD TO SIN

**What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> 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.**

**<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—<sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.**

**<sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. <sup>10</sup> The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

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“I can do what I want. It’s a free country,” he insisted. “I can quit any time I like.” So he did. For about three days. Then he went straight back to that habit he couldn’t shake. Months later, he finally quit. In a pine box about 7-foot by 2-and-a-half. At the funeral, one of his family members remarked, “At least now his battle with addiction is over.”

How many deaths from addiction is too many? In the wake of the opioid crisis our country wrestles with, different reports give vastly different numbers for deaths due to drug overdose. One estimates from 2000 to 2015, 500,000 people have died in the U.S. alone because they couldn’t kick the habit. Not to undercut the seriousness of that data, but our nation—and the whole world—faces a much greater addiction. In our “free country,” we are enslaving ourselves all over again. Our slave master, sin, is killing us. But not you. No, your life begins with death. All of you who have been baptized into the death of Christ are DEAD TO SIN.

By nature we are born in sin. Sin is a cruel master. It tells you you can do whatever you want, and promises freedom. That couldn’t be farther from the truth. Sin tells you to do what feels good. Make yourself happy. Treat yourself. Be good to yourself. It pervades our culture, seeps into us. Sin ensnares and enslaves us. Once you start, you can’t stop. The only way out is death. Every sin as fatal as the last. Every trespass one step closer to the grave. Tyrant Sin kills absolutely.

So God jumpstarted the whole process. He sent Jesus. The Son of God didn’t give in to sin, even once. He came to bring life, life to the full. So he became sin. Your life begins with his death. He DIED FOR our SIN deserves. God’s grace—his love for you in Jesus—is greater than all our sin combined. If our sin multiplied like the waters of a rising flood or increased infections of coronavirus, God’s grace increases all the more. The perfect life of a perfect Savior more than compensates sin. In Jesus you haven’t won a lifetime supply of your favorite product, but a lifetime of grace that never runs out.

Our sin shows us what depths God will go to to love us. He put his life on the line, died for us. Since our sin shows God’s love, Paul asks, “**Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?**” Jesus death has set us free from sin. DEAD TO SIN. Now we’re free, can we finally do whatever we want?

Some have said that if God sets us free from sin completely by his grace, and by grace alone, people won’t do good anymore since they don’t gain anything by it. If you don’t earn your salvation with your good works, the religion of the world, run by master sin, says, there’s no reason to do them!

God's answer is baptism. Your life—your spiritual life with Christ—began with his death. You were with Jesus at his tomb. The cross proclaims powerfully Christ for you. Baptism preaches that same cross; it puts you with Jesus on the cross. Jesus with you and you with Jesus. Your old life, the old man, that sinful nature mastered by sin, was crucified with Jesus in the waters of baptism. DEAD TO SIN. God buried your sin with Christ in the tomb. Your baptism was a funeral! Your sinful nature was put in a pine box, laid next to Jesus in his tomb. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust! DEAD TO SIN. God planted you with Jesus in his death, caused you to grow with him, to live a new life with him. Since you died with Jesus, you will also live with him forever in heaven.

Living with Jesus begins now. Your life began at your baptism, in the tomb of Jesus. There your old life ended! DEAD TO SIN, your new life begins. Now you live to please God. You want to do what's right. The spirit is willing. But the flesh is weak. Like an addiction, you keep coming back to it. You just can't quite kick the habit.

The majority of our country showers every day. Maybe you begin each day with water. Your life began with water, too. Each day, in the shower or out, remember water joined you to Jesus. You are DEAD TO SIN. Start each day with your baptism. Bury your sinful nature in your baptism. Kill it. And kill it again. And again. Like you lather, rinse, and repeat with shampoo or soap, lather yourself with the God's Word that declares you dead to sin. Wash yourself in the baptism that joins you with Jesus on the cross. And repeat. Every day is a day of dying. Each day, DEAD TO SIN.

And each day, alive to God. Jesus rose! So will you. That life begins now. Jesus ascended into heaven. The unbelieving world doesn't see the risen Jesus. It sees you. While on earth, we live out Jesus' resurrection. DEAD TO SIN, now you are at last free to please God! Free, not to earn your salvation, but free at last to love the God who loved us to death!

So you're free to do what you want! Now you're free of the old way, controlled by that cruel slave master, sin. The battle continues, yes. Each day, DIE TO SIN. Each day, live to God. Under his grace, his love, you are free to please God. Your new man, that new nature God gave you at your baptism—the nature and image of Jesus himself—wants to please God. So deny yourself. Deny your sinful nature. Don't do what makes you feel God. Do what pleases God, who united you to Jesus at your baptism. DEAD TO SIN.

We live in a world surrounded by death. Our world is addicted, not just to drugs, but to sin itself. The world lives to please itself. But not you. Sin no longer controls you. Say to sin, "I am baptized into Christ's death. I'm DEAD TO SIN. Today I live for God." Amen.