

CrossRoads Baptist Church
April 27, 2008 10:15 a.m.
Romans 6:1-4
Romans #35

Our Identity With His Burial

Normally when we think of burials it is not a good emotion unless you are thinking of burying the hatchet of a warring and sparing relationship; or finding buried treasures which I remind you is only in fictional material, not reality; or for some it might be burying an aquarium fish – then that could be different for different people. I know what you normally do with the dead fish from the aquarium, but let me tell you there was a time when I was young that I gave those babies a proper burial. How do you think I learned to do funerals?

Or the burial might be of a family pet or a family member or relative. The point is that burials do not carry a good connotation for most of us.

But could I interest you in a talk this morning if burying something was good.

I. Pronouncement of your Death.

When someone or something dies, you need someone to be able to pronounce that you are dead. The Corner, the attending physician, the dad (for the fish, that is).

Well, someone else announced your birth; someone else will announce your death.

But we are not talking about your physical death, we are talking about the death of the old man, the old self.

Who pronounces your old man dead? For sure you can't. But God can.

II. Protocol when you Die

What is the proper protocol when someone dies.

1 Make sure the subject is dead.

Sept. 17, 2007, there was a Venezuelan man who had been declared dead that woke up in the morgue in excruciating pain after medical examiners began their autopsy. Carlos Camejo, 33, was declared dead after a highway accident and was taken to the morgue, where examiners began an autopsy only to realize something was amiss when he started bleeding. They quickly sought to stitch up the incision on the face.

Camejo said, "I woke up because the pain was unbearable. You can image the shock and yet exhilarating joy when the wife came to the morgue to identify his body only to find him in the hallway – alive!

(<http://www.reuters.com/article/oddlyEnoughNews/idUSN149975820070917>)

2 Then prepare burial

This process is the process of embalming the body where you drain out all the blood replacing it with emblaic fluids. I have actually seen this done, but I won't go into that story for the sake of time or lunch to follow. For the sake of the family and public viewing, then the mortician will dress the body and then put make up on them so everyone can say, "Don't they look so natural."

3 Then bury them.

This is simple enough, isn't it? Bury what is dead. Take a shovel or back hoe, and bury the dead person, dead dog, dead fish.

But not so quick.

Today you don't have to be buried, you can be freeze-dried and hang around. One article was named "Get Your Ice-Cold Afterlife Here." Ted Williams, the former pro baseball player, did. The company in Arizona that is working to store all or part of the former Red Sox

slugger, charges as much as \$120,000 per cold-storage job. Now you can just do your head for \$50,000.00 But if that is too much, a company in Michigan, perhaps taking a cue from car dealers, boasts that its freeze jobs are offered at “The Most Affordable Prices Available” – as low as \$28,000.00. They have been doing this since 1977.

Now if I wanting to be freezed in hopes that I can be thawed in 50-100 years and start living again, I don’t know if I want to trust the lowest bid? What about you?

The two largest facilities say they have almost 1,000 families signed up waiting for these services. Of course you know what the wait is for...death. One facility in Clinton, Michigan has 37 people, 10 cats and six dogs frozen. I guess some want to come back with their pets. I wonder if they are choosing the same for their spouses? Just a thought.

But with this process, the blood is removed from the body after death and replace it with a kind of antifreeze found in insects, frogs and turtles. But with the help of liquid nitrogen, bodies are kept at a steady temperature of 328 degrees below zero.

So if you don’t want to be buried, may be you want to just do this? (Show powerpoint slide) The bodies are stored in these cylinders in sleeping bags immersed in liquid nitrogen.

Of course, the other side of this –are you really sure you want to wait for 200 years, come back with 10 billion people already on the earth and trace down your relatives and tell them you’ve come to live with them? I don’t like that scenario. Plus no telling what else Gore or Gates will have invented and your learning curve will be astronomical.

So, why don’t we just go ahead and bury that dead man.

To leave a body unburied was, to Jew and Greeks alike, the greatest possible indignity.

Praying Hyde of India, “It is not enough to have the self-life crucified, it must be buried or the stench of it will drive souls away from Jesus.”

III. Person of your Burial

No one can bury themselves. It takes someone else to do that task. Whether eight men called pallbearers or less. You can not bury yourself.

We saw this three weeks ago concerning crucifixion. You can’t crucify yourself and people teach you can. You just need to crucify the flesh. You can’t do it to yourself; and neither can you bury yourself.

But we identify with the burial of Jesus through baptism. I want to submit that the main person of burial is the Holy Spirit but it happened through baptism. See verses 3-4.

Now the question here is whether this is water baptism or spirit baptism.

Either way, you don’t baptize yourself. I tell baptismal candidates the worse thing they can do is to try to baptize themselves. Relax and let me do it.

Bu you notice that “we were baptized into Christ Jesus, into His death” (verse 3) and “we were buried with Him through baptism into death.” (verse 4)

Whatever it is, it either happens at salvation or with salvation. In verse four, we see that baptism is the instrument of our death and burial. It says, “we were buried with Him through baptism into death.”

So what is this baptism? Into what were we baptized? Two options:

1. Water baptism

Many scholars believe that it is for these reasons:

1. It seems water baptism occurred so quickly after their expression

of faith that the two events could be seen as one. Phillipian jailer, the Ethiopian eunuch

2. Another argument is that Paul use of *baptizeio* – to baptize- always refers to water baptism.

3. That is was preached that all believers would be baptized. To say that one is a believer but unbaptized would be an anomaly.

4. All believe that if it is water baptism that it's not at water baptism that we die and rise with Christ, but a symbol of it.

5. Baptism could not be seen as the cause for our identity for Paul has spent five chapters arguing that we enter into a saving relationship by faith alone.

And this contradicts other baptismal passages:

Galatians 3: 26-27 “For you are all sons of God **through faith** in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Colossians 2:12 “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him **through faith** in the working of God,...”

It's by faith and not works. To try to preach that Paul is advocating salvational baptism would be to contradict everything he has said about salvation by grace and faith.

And immersion is the only way to show this death, burial and resurrection and clearly it is for believers only. That's why we don't sprinkle and that's why we don't baptize infants. Infants can not express their faith in Jesus, thus are not candidates for baptism.

And it is a one-time experience. You don't keep burying someone. It is a one time past experience. It's not burying you, then you come back to life, and then we bury you again.

Verse 2 is in the past – we saw that in the last sermon. “You died to sin” and “you live no longer in it.”

That's why this church will recognize baptisms from other denominations as long as you were immersed with the understanding that Jesus is the Son of God, virgin born, lived a sinless life, died a

substitutionary death, rose again the third day and one is saved only by grace through faith.

But others, like Martin Lloyd Jones, believes this is a reference to Spirit baptism.

2. Spirit baptism

There are two Biblical experiences of Spirit baptism.

1. Acts 1:5 Jesus said, “for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” That was fulfilled at Pentecost.

2. I Corinthians 12:13 “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - “

Here the focus is not on the baptism, but the unity, the oneness, the common agency and experience of one Spirit and one body (verse 12).

And note “all” in verse 12 – “We were all baptized” – Jew and Gentile, slave or free, male or female. This was an experience that was common to everyone who are believers.

And the later part of verse 13 “and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” To drink means that we have been given the Holy Spirit to drink. To take in.

I don't believe in this passage that either of these references are to the ordinances of baptism or the Lord's Supper, but what happened to us at the moment of salvation.

As aliens and foreigners outside of the body of God, the Holy Spirit “put us into the body of Christ” by immersing us completely and once-for-all into His body. And we were made to drink of Him fully.

Now we can say, we are in Him, and He is in us.

But baptism is not the central theme of I Corinthians 12:12-13 and

neither of Romans 6:3-4. In fact in Romans, it is not even motioned after verse 4. The central theme of the Corinthians passage is Christ – look at verse 12 – “so also is Christ.” We are one with Christ.

That same theme is in Romans 6.

Verse 3 – “baptized into Christ”

Verse 3 – “baptized into His death”

Verse 4 – “baptized with Him”

And the other over-arching theme of Romans 6 is the old man is dead and sin’s power had been broken.

Romans 6:6 “Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”

Again, what do you do with old dead bodies? Bury them.

Verse 7 – “we are freed from sin.”

Verse 14 – “For sin shall not have dominion over you...”

Whatever, Paul clearly says to the Romans “do you not know.” (verse 3). The very essence of the question is that they knew. They were not ignorant of the meaning of baptism.

IV. Permanence of your Burial

So “you know” this – the old man is dead and buried. So, let that which is buried, stay buried.

Don’t go digging up the decomposing body. It stinks and you are sick. And it will make you sicker. Leave it alone.

What simple truth, as well.

Your old person is gone.

Would you like for your old person – your old identity – your old self to be gone forever?

To good news you can. Its for “everybody” – whether Jew or Gentile, religious or pagan, male or female.