

*What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For whoever has died is freed from sin. <sup>8</sup>But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup>We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion 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>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

Never speak of me as “the old man”.

Out of the blue – the way I just said it, my father spoke these words to me. “Never call me, “The old man.”

It had never even occurred to me to call my father that. That may have been a way of speaking that was common when my father was a child, but I did not hear it used among my friends. So it was not hard for me to promise, “I never will.”

Later I wondered what stood behind all of this. I think that my father heard the use of “the old man” by his friends as disrespect. Sometimes kids are more intent with seeing how much they can get away with rather than with respecting a relationship with father or mother. My father did not want that from me. My father was letting me know that he did not want me to take him for granted.

If you knew that the person with the hand extended, begging for a dollar or two was not just using you, you would probably give. Or that phone caller that wants some of your time – if that person had respect for you you would probably listen. But far too often generosity and being available get you labeled as a soft touch.

Our second lesson today begins with these words: “Should we continue in sin that grace may abound?”

Kind of a strange question. But not so strange when we consider what Paul has just written: “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.” Paul was talking about what God has done in Christ, overcoming sin through the free gift of God’s love – grace. Through Jesus Christ grace is God’s response to sin – not punishment –

not the torture of a fiery hell – but grace for all who believe. Well, if grace is God’s response to sin should we continue in sin that grace may abound? We sin, God forgives, everyone is happy.

But that is not the way you or I would most likely say it. We like this one better: Well, I am only human. As I say it I am implying that I will continue in sin and that grace will abound. I’m only human. God will forgive, nothing to worry about.

It’s like one kid telling another: “The old man says we got to do this work but he isn’t going to check. Don’t worry about it.”

“Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we too might walk in newness of life.”

In baptism you died with Christ. In baptism you are put on the cross with Christ. In your baptism all the judgement for your sin was laid upon Christ.

Paul writes: “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.”

Your old self was crucified with Christ so that you might walk in newness of life.

In another place Paul says it in this way: “If anyone is in Christ there is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold everything has become new.”

Paul is talking about you who believe. Paul is telling what God has done.

Should you fear death? No, death is behind you, you died with Christ. Life is ahead of you – 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.

When God looks at you, God sees Christ. All the love God has for Christ God has for you. All the life God has poured into Christ God is pouring into you. All the faithfulness that Christ lived in his dying belongs to you.

Therefore sin has no power over you. Don't say, "I am only human." Say, "I am a new creation in Christ. All my sins have been taken down into death in Christ's dying and Christ left them there - dead in death. They have no power to accuse no power to shame, no power at all because they are dead in death.

Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Maybe you and I will take God for granted. Christ took that sin down into death, also, for that is part of the old self that was put on the cross with Christ. But I know that God wants more for you and for me. God wants faith for you and for me – let's pray God will get God's way with us. Amen.