

How God's Grace Operates



Foundations (Day 128)
by Derek Prince

We shall complete our examination of Christian baptism by unfolding, from the teaching of the New Testament, the spiritual significance of this ordinance.

The key text which unlocks this truth is found in Romans:

> "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that 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. For he who has died has been freed from sin." (6:1-7)

In Romans 5 Paul emphasised the abundance of God's grace toward the depths of man's sin.

> "But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." (v. 20)

This leads to the question Paul asks in Romans 6:1: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" In other words, Paul imagines someone asking: "If God's grace is in proportion to man's sin, abounding most where sin abounds most, shall we deliberately go on sinning that God's grace may abound toward us all the more? Is this the way to avail ourselves of God's grace toward sinners?"

Paul's answer to this dangerous suggestion points out that it is based on a complete misunderstanding of how God's grace operates. In order for a sinner to avail himself of God's grace there must be a definite, personal transaction by faith between the sinner and God. The nature of this transaction is such that it produces a total transformation within the

personality of the sinner.

There are two opposite, but mutually complementary, sides to this transformation produced by God's grace in the sinner's personality. First there is a death – a death to sin and the old life. Then there is a new life – a life lived to God and to righteousness.

In the light of this fact about the way in which God's grace operates in the sinner and the results which it produces, we are faced with two alternative, mutually exclusive possibilities: If we have availed ourselves of God's grace, we are dead to sin; on the other hand, if we are not dead to sin, then we have not availed ourselves of God's grace. It is therefore illogical, and impossible, to speak of availing ourselves of God's grace and at the same time be living in sin. These two things can never go together. Paul points this out in Romans 6:2: "Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

Devotional

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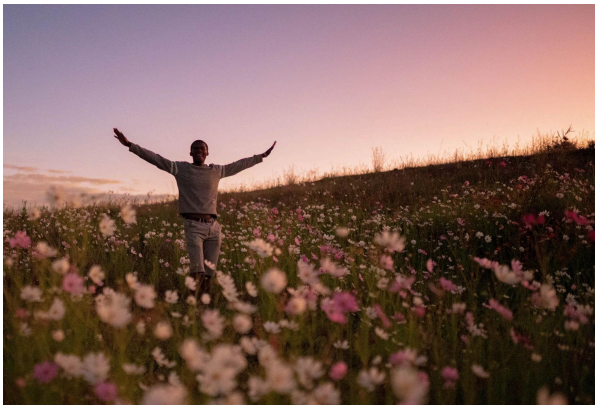

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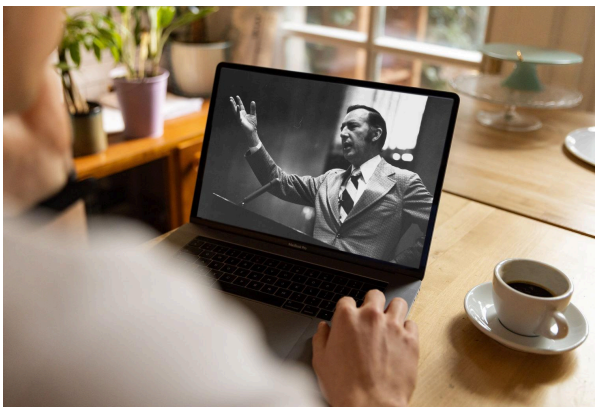

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