

In several places in the Bible, a prophet acts out a pantomime – a wordless performance – to illustrate a truth. In 1 Kings 11 the prophet Ahijah tears his garment into twelve pieces and hands ten of them to Jeroboam to show that Solomon’s kingdom will be divided and ten tribes given to Jeroboam. Jeremiah buries his loincloth on the banks of the Euphrates as a picture of the chastening his people will receive in Babylon. Agabus ties his hands and feet with Paul’s belt, warning Paul he will be arrested and bound in Jerusalem.

Have you been baptized? If so, you too have portrayed important truths of the Christian’s relation to Christ.

First, two men lowered you into the water (probably). If they had pushed you under, you would have struggled but you trusted them. Just as you trusted in Christ.

You were under the water for a brief time. Too long, and you might have drowned. Jonah was under the water for three whole days but lived – because he was inside a whale. You, on the other hand, are in Christ. You have

died with him, according to this week’s passage. The penalty for Adam’s sin was death. The penalty for any infraction of the law was death. Christ paid that penalty for you and you have died along with Him.

Finally you rose up out of the water, as Jesus rose from the grave. Your clothes were soaked and your wet hair was streaming down. You hardly looked like yourself. But you were smiling. You felt like a new person. *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me* (Gal. 2:20).

You may not have realized it at the time, but in that simple act you presented a beautiful picture of the believer’s **identification with Christ** and **position in Christ**, both in His death and in His life. An understanding of these truths from Romans 6 is essential to growing in Christ.

Questions:

1. What is the notion that verse 1 refutes? Have you ever heard anyone accuse Christians of it?
2. How can we say we have died to sin?
3. How does the act of baptism resemble Jesus’s experience?
4. How would you define walking in “newness of life”?

5. Verse 6 says our old “man” was crucified with Christ. What man might that refer to?
6. Is a Christian more free, or less free, than an unbeliever? Explain.
7. The subject of this passage is holiness, or freedom from sin in our lives. A new believer wants to please God and might make a sort of New Year’s resolution to try very hard to sin less. Is that the apostle Paul’s prescription for holiness? If not, how would you define being “dead to sin”?
8. In your own experience, is it possible to gain victory over sin without a “law,” or a strict set of rules for your behavior?