



**Sermon: [Drowned and Delivered!](#) – Jeff Kurbis (Teacher - Evergreen Lutheran High School)**  
Sunday Service 10:15 am – January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – At [Living Hope Lutheran Church](#)

**Sermon Text: Roman 6:1-11 – (NIV 1984)**

### **Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ**

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We 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> If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with,<sup>[a]</sup> that we should no longer be slaves to sin— <sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been freed 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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[Did you see the movie “127 Hours” a couple years back?](#) One critic wrote of it: “Oscar-winning director Danny Boyle ('Slumdog Millionaire') brings his A-game in this harrowing look at real-life mountain climber Aron Ralston, who was forced to amputate his own arm after it became trapped by a boulder in 2003. The heart of the film lies in its brilliant lead performance by James Franco, whose one-man show beautifully captured Ralston's humor, sadness, fear and, finally, his determination to survive” (<http://blog.moviefone.com/2010/09/01/best-movies-of-2010/-AS>).

Maybe you read the account of Aron Ralston in the paper or saw clips of his ordeal on television. In April 2003, while he was hiking remote Blue John Canyon in SE Utah a suspended boulder became dislodged, pinning his arm against the canyon wall. Ralston hadn't told anybody of his hiking plans and knew no one would be searching for him. Assuming he'd die, he spent five days slowly sipping his remaining water while trying to free his arm. On the fourth day he realized that if he hoped to survive he'd have to cut through his bones, but he didn't have the necessary tools. When he ran out of water on the fifth day, he carved his name, date of birth and presumed date of death into the sandstone canyon wall, and videotaped his last goodbyes to his family.

Not expecting to survive the night, he found himself still alive at dawn the next day. Soon after, he had an epiphany—he could break his radius and ulna using torque against his trapped arm. He did so, and then performed the amputation, which took about an hour with his two-inch knife. After freeing himself, he climbed out of the slot canyon where he'd been trapped, rappelled down a 65-foot sheer wall one-handed and hiked out of the canyon in the hot midday sun. While he was still 8 miles from his vehicle he encountered a vacationing family from the Netherlands who gave him water and alerted authorities. Ralston was rescued, six hours after amputating his arm. He thinks that had he amputated his arm earlier, he'd have bled to death before being found, but that if he hadn't done so he'd've died a few days later from dehydration. In the end, Ralston survived his amazing ordeal because he made a conscious decision to choose life over limb.



In Romans chapter 6 verses 1-11, the Apostle Paul describes the death-to-life experience of Holy Baptism and what baptized believers are willing to give up for the sake of the new life they now enjoy in Christ Jesus. In Baptism, believers receive all of the benefits and blessings Christ won for the world when He willingly gave His life into death on the cross. On this Sunday when we remember the Baptism of our Lord, let's search the Scriptures anew and learn how . . .

**IN OUR BAPTISM, OUR OLD SELF WAS DROWNED AND CUT OFF SO THAT WE COULD  
ARISE TO LIVE A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST!**

Our text begins with a seemingly plausible question. Paul had just taught his Roman readers that “where sin increased, grace increased all the more” <sup>(5:20)</sup>. So, some thought, if that's the case why not “go on sinning so that grace may increase.” Sounds pretty holy on the surface of things doesn't it? After all, you can't get enough of God's grace! But it was a carnal question at its core. Think of the possibilities! One could indulge his sinful flesh any way he chose and still be forgiven by God: sex, drugs and rock'n'roll; pagan idolatry and licentious immorality to the max!

But St. Paul responds with a resounding, “NO WAY!” He writes, “We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” Our sin separates us from the holy God. It is a rejection of the life the LORD originally designed us for at the beginning of time. So how is it, then, that we who have “died to sin” by our baptism “into Christ Jesus” would want to keep on despising our Savior and all that He did not only to accomplish our justification in God's sight but our sanctification too? Paul adds: “Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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.” Jesus died to atone for every sin you and I and the rest of mankind has ever and will ever commit until He comes again on the Last Day. He hung bleeding and dying on Calvary's accursed tree, bearing in His body all the guilt of our transgressions, taking the punishment we deserved and suffering the condemnation we had coming in order to free us from sin's sting of eternal death.

God's grace in Christ makes full atonement to the Father for the sinful stain in every human soul. “The blood of Jesus, God's Son, purifies us from all sin,” John wrote in his first epistle (1:7). You and I can now stand as saints in the sight of the holy God, completely cleansed of our culpability as those who have clothed in the robe of Jesus' righteousness at our Baptism into His death.



But there's so much more that happened for us at that font of full and free forgiveness! Paul pens, "If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin." We were literally drowned to the sin that once separated us from God and enslaved us. Like Aron Ralston amputating his own arm to save his life, our sin has been removed from us "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps. 103:12). As a result, we've been saved from certain death in hell and given a brand-new lease on life here on earth and in heaven. All of that happened for us at our Baptism into Christ—Christ, who was "cut off" from His Father during those hours of mid-day darkness on Good Friday so that He cried out in utter despair, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" That's hell. Hell is being cast off by God not just for a few excruciating hours, but for an agonizing eternity. And Jesus endured that for us!

This life, then, is our opportunity to say "thank you" to Jesus for paying the price to ransom us from sin's guilt and power, and liberating us from the fate we'd earned by our rebellion. So Paul writes: "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God." We've been called to live holy lives—set-apart lives—that honor God completely. As Christ's baptized daughters and sons, we daily die to ourselves and our own sinful urges and desires, and rise to a newness of life that seeks to glorify God and serve those whom He has seen fit to put in our path. When our eyes are turned inward and on ourselves—as they all too often are—this death to self can be daunting. But when the Holy Spirit turns our eyes of faith away from ourselves and toward our Savior, Jesus, that task is transformed from a tiresome burden into a joyful privilege!

The account of international sailing champion Pete Goss and his heroic rescue of a fellow sailor provides us with a good illustration of the deliverance from self-interest to the self-sacrificing concern for a fellow man in need of our help. On November 3, 1996, former Royal Marine Pete Goss embarked on the most grueling competition in his storied sailing career: the Vendee Globe, a nonstop, solo, round-the-world yacht race. Goss had trained for years, and this race was everything to him. But seven weeks after Goss' race began he received a May Day distress signal. It was Christmas Day. A French competitor was sinking 160 miles away, and Goss was the nearest person available to launch a rescue attempt. Goss turned his eyes from himself and his own interests of winning the Vendee Globe and to the needs of his French competitor. For 2 days, Goss battled hurricane strength winds and risk to himself to search for this sailor who by then was near death in the vast wilderness of the southern Indian Ocean. At the sacrifice of his personal dream and goal, Pete Goss heroically saved this man's life (Pete Goss, Close to the Wind [Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 1998], 268).



The new life of a Christian in Baptism—the life that cares for others rather than for self—is a life of death: not ours, but Christ’s for us and Christ in us by the indwelling of amazing Holy Spirit. We were buried with Christ by baptism into *His* death. But our new life is also one of resurrection: of the Spirit’s power over sin in our daily affairs as He empowers us to willingly and faithfully serve our risen Savior and Lord. Now you and I “walk about” in the newness of life, seeking the opportunities Jesus inevitably puts before us to share His love with others, beginning in our own homes & church, then expanding out to our various workplaces, neighborhoods & social circles.

The final verse of our text illuminates one more facet on the gemstone of salvation & sanctification. In English we read the word *count*. But the word in the Greek comes from the world of finance. It’s as if Paul were saying, “Write it down in your ledger. Use it to balance the books of your life. Count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” What a wonderful truth! The new life we’ve received from Christ is as real and certain as the math your accountant does. In God’s ledger, your debt is wiped out! The sinful person you once were died on Calvary’s cross with Christ. That person was buried with Christ in your Baptism. Now you and I have been raised with Christ from the dead. We have a whole new life, a fresh start. In your Baptism, it’s a brand new day—every day! That “old us” could do nothing *but* sin. The “new us”—the baptized and resurrected us, now wants only and always to please Jesus, the One who died for us and rose again. That’s what counts with God—the God who’s done it all for us in Christ and done it all in us by His Spirit! Not unto us, but unto Him, be glory, honor and praise forever and ever! Amen.