

6/23-29#3: The Likeness of the Death and Resurrection of Christ: I. "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death" (Rom. 6:3): **A** Baptism is not a form or a ritual; it signifies our identification with Christ. **B** Through baptism we are immersed into Christ, taking Him as our realm, that we may be united with Him as one in His death and resurrection. **C** We were born in the sphere of Adam, the first man, but through baptism we have been transferred into the sphere of Christ, the second man. **1 Cor. 1:30** But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption. **D** When we are baptized into Christ, we are baptized into His death. **E** His death has separated us from the world and the satanic power of darkness and has terminated our natural life, our old nature, our self, our flesh, and even our entire history.

II. "We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4): **A** Our old man has been crucified with Christ, and it has been buried with Him through baptism into death. **B** ...knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves. **C** In the natural realm, a person first dies and then is buried, but Paul's word indicates that in the spiritual realm, we are first buried and then die. **D** We do not die directly; we enter into Christ's death through baptism. **E** Christ and His death are one. **F** Apart from Christ we could never be baptized into His death, for the element of His effective death is found only in Him, the resurrected, all-inclusive One. **G** The glory of the Father in Romans 6:4 refers to the manifestation of divinity. **H** After baptism we become a new person in resurrection. **I** Resurrection is not only a future state; it is also a present process. **J** To walk in newness of life means to live today in the realm of resurrection and to reign in life. **Rom. 5:17**...Much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. **K** This kind of living deals with all that is of Adam in us until we are fully transformed and conformed to the image of Christ.

III. "If we have grown together with Him in the

likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection." (Rom.6:5): **A** Grown together with Him denotes an organic union in which growth takes place, so that one partakes of the life and characteristics of the Other. **B** In the organic union with Christ, whatever Christ passed through has become our history. **C** His death and resurrection are now ours because we are in Him and are organically joined to Him; this is grafting. **Rom.11:24** For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into the cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree! **D** Such a grafting discharges all our negative elements, resurrects our God created faculties, uplifts our faculties, enriches our faculties, and saturates our entire being to transform us. **E** The likeness of Christ's death is the baptism mentioned in Romans 6:4; the likeness of Christ's resurrection is the newness of life mentioned in verse 4. **F** In the likeness of His resurrection does not refer to a future, objective resurrection but to the present process of growth. **G** When we were baptized, we grew together with Christ in the likeness of His death; now, through His death we are growing into His resurrection. **H** Just as the element of Christ's death is found only in Him, so the element of Christ's resurrection is found only in Christ Himself; He Himself is resurrection. **John.11:25** Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live; **I** After experiencing a proper baptism, we continue to grow in and with Christ in the likeness of His resurrection, that is, to walk in newness of life.

IV. "Many...were baptized into Christ"(Gal.3:27):

A There are four aspects of baptism: baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, baptized into Christ, baptized into the death of Christ, and baptized into the Body of Christ. **Matt.28:19** Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **1Cor.12:13** also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit. **B** Baptism brings the repentant people out of their old state into a new one by terminating their old life and germinating

them with the new life of Christ and in Christ. **C** Baptism has two aspects—the visible aspect and the invisible aspect: **1** The visible aspect is by water, and the invisible aspect is by the Holy Spirit. **Acts.2:38** And Peter said to them, Repent and each one of you be baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **2** Without the invisible aspect by the Spirit, the visible aspect by water is vain, and without the visible aspect by water, the invisible aspect by the Spirit is abstract and impractical; both are needed. **D** To be baptized into the Triune God is to be baptized into Christ: **1** We are sons of God because we are in Christ, and we are in Christ because we have been baptized into Christ. **2** To be baptized into Christ is the way to be in Christ. **3** Because we have been baptized into Christ, we now enjoy an organic union with Him, which is able to transform our whole being. **4** It is significant that at the end of chapter 3 of Galatians Paul concludes with a word about being baptized into Christ and putting on Christ. **5** The fact that Paul concludes with a word about baptism indicates that what is covered in this chapter can be experienced only if we have been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ. **6** As many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **7** We have been baptized into Christ, and now we have Christ covering us. **8** On the one hand, in baptism we are immersed into Christ; on the other hand, in baptism we put on Christ. **9** Many of us can testify strongly that we have been baptized into Christ and that we are wearing Him as our clothing, our covering. **Testimony** I was baptized shortly after entering university. Through baptism, I terminated my old life, Christ came to dwell in me, and I put on Christ. However, due to the religious concepts within myself and the harsh environment of Japan—where Christians are extremely few (only 0.4% are Catholic and 0.3% Protestant)—I was unable to clearly understand the spiritual realities. In school or at work, I could not expect to find any other Christians around me. Seeing the fallen condition of the Gentiles, I became unbelieving, thinking that even as a Christian, I could not change anything in such an environment. In these harsh circumstances, I began to wonder

how the great gap between the truths revealed in the Bible and my actual daily life could be bridged. I especially felt this when I visited the churches in Taiwan and saw the glory expressed through them. Then I began to consider and pray: **“If the church life practiced in Taiwan follows the revelation of the Bible, then it must be possible to practice it in Japan as well. Even though the degree of difficulty may differ, God’s ordained way is surely workable in Japan.”** With this burden, I reexamined both my church service and my business life, and prayed through each issue one by one. Although I experienced many failures, by the Lord’s mercy and grace, I believe that over the past 37 years, I have been able to testify to some extent that *the new way is workable in Japan*—that is, God’s ordained way, the way of meeting and serving according to the New Testament. The secret I have learned over these 37 years can be summarized as follows: **① In Japan, Satan’s grip is extremely tight; nothing can be gained through a half-hearted approach. ② However, through faith in Christ and God’s economy, if we realize that the Lord lives within the believers, that we have put on Christ outwardly, and that we are the corporate Body, we can more than conquer over Satan’s schemes. ③ In carrying out the new way, we must practice everything thoroughly. ④ Without becoming discouraged, persistently continue to implement, learn, and repeatedly make adjustments to the practices. ⑤ When the saints experience even a small success, it should be shared immediately with everyone so that all may learn from one another and teach one another. ⑥ The practice of the new way is based on high truth and a God-man living. A solid foundation in truth and in the experience of life is necessary in order to shepherd according to God. ⑦ To stand against Satan, we must remain in the Body, stay in the flow of the Spirit, and rely on the victory of Christ—there is no other way.**

Prayer May the Lord bless all the local churches in Japan through their faithful practice of shepherding according to God, based on truth and the experience of life. Amen!