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## **The Glories of Baptism**

### **Romans 6.1-4**

#### **Series: The Pure Gospel**

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## I. Introduction

### A. **Scylla and Charybdis**

1. Perhaps those names are familiar to you

B. To some who are acquainted with Greek mythology, and the works of Homer, we know them as sea monsters

1. In the mythology, they were situated on opposite sides of the Strait of Messina, between Sicily and the Italian mainland

2. Scylla was postulated as a six-headed sea monster, presenting as a rock shoal on the mainland side of the strait

3. Charybdis was presented as a whirlpool off the coast of Sicily

4. They were seen as hazards for sailors, who had difficulty passing between the two monsters

a. The Strait of Messina was so narrow, that it was difficult to pass through

b. To get past one you had to place yourself in danger of the other

5. For instance, in Homer's account, Odysseus was advised to come closer to Scylla and only lose a few sailors who might be picked off by the six-headed monster

a. Rather than go too close to Charybdis, and have the entire vessel captured in the whirlpool

6. At least that's what the half dozen or so here this morning remember from their foray into Greek mythology back in their school days

C. Most of the rest of us who have heard of Scylla and Charybdis have picked them up from use as a proverb

1. A proverb that has become a metaphor for the difficulty of choosing between two bad alternatives

2. More contemporary idioms expressing similar ideas include

a. "Between a rock and a hard place"

b. "Between the devil and deep blue sea"

c. "Out of the frying pan into the fire"

d. "Catch 22"

D. Christianity has its own Scylla and Charybdis

1. They are called "Legalism and Antinomianism"

2. The church, historically, has drifted toward one or the other

- a. Tending either toward the six headed monster of legalism on the one hand
  - b. Or the maelstrom of antinomianism on the other
- E. But wait? What?
  - 1. What are legalism and antinomianism?
- F. Legalism is when the church creates a whole system of man-made laws, all with good intentions, designed to prevent us erring humans from straying too close to the boundaries God has established for our welfare
  - 1. The Pharisees were perhaps the most well-known sect to take this course
  - 2. The movement began with all good intentions – essentially the “Back to the Bible” movement in inter-testamental Judaism (Judaism between the end of the OT and the beginning of the NT)
    - a. But in the end had created a system of more than 600 rules and regulations that went beyond those given by God in the Hebrew scriptures
- G. Antinomianism, on the other hand, strays in the opposite direction
  - 1. **Root = nomos – law (Gk)**
  - 2. **Antinomianism = anti-lawism**
  - 3. Some Christian sects have reasoned that if we are saved by grace, through faith, we don’t any longer have to be concerned about obeying the Law of God
    - a. We can do whatever we please
    - b. We can sin with impunity
  - 4. Since we can’t be saved by obeying the Law, let’s just follow whatever impulses and inclinations we want
    - a. In fact, since “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Romans 5.20), let’s just sin like crazy!
- H. So the church has tended, throughout our history, to have sailed its ship into Scylla – the six-headed monster of legalism, or into Charybdis – the devastating whirlpool of antinomianism

## II. **The Pure Gospel**

- A. Well, today we return to our study of the Book of Romans
  - 1. A study entitled The Pure Gospel
- B. Just before Advent we had explored the first five chapters, and then we took a break
  - 1. A break for Advent
  - 2. A break for Global Impact Week
  - 3. A break to do what we often want to revisit here at TVC – our Mission Statement and Core Values (The DNA of TVC)
  - 4. But now – finally! – we’re back in Romans
- C. So we need to take a few moments to review where we’ve been in these first five chapters
  - 1. So we’ll be able to see where Paul next takes us
    - a. So this introductory metaphor actually makes sense

2. Because Paul captains our Gospel ship through treacherous waters
  - a. Navigating our way between Scylla and Charybdis
  - b. Bringing us safely home to our harbor of grace
- D. Romans is about the Gospel
  1. **Romans 1:16–17** (ESV) —
    - a. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
    - b. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”
- E. Then Paul begins to expound on our need for the gospel
  1. He indicates that God is angry – wrath is the word used – with humanity for suppressing the truth about God in unrighteousness
  2. **Romans 1:18–20** (ESV) —
    - a. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
    - b. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.
    - c. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.
  3. Then through the end of Chapter 1 he indicates how God executes His judgment on rebellious humanity
    - a. He essentially gives human beings over to their sin – let’s us do what we want
    - b. And the result is a downward spiral of degradation – one that would clearly be recognizable to us in our own culture which is in one of the most disastrous moral declines in history
    - c. Or, as C.S. Lewis once said, the best thing we can say to God is “Thy will be done”
    - d. But the worse thing we can hear God say to us is “Thy will be done”
  4. In Chapter 2 Paul then demonstrates how both Jews – who have the written Law of God – and the Gentiles – who do not have the written law, but have the law written implicitly in their hearts
    - a. How both the religious and the non-religious are guilty of sin
  5. **Romans 3:23** (ESV) — 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..
  6. But then in Chapter 3 Paul gloriously gives us God’s solution to this universal human predicament of sin
  7. **Romans 3:21–22** (ESV) —

- a. 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—
    - b. 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe....
  - 8. He goes on to say what God has done for us in Jesus Christ
  - 9. **Romans 3:24–25** (ESV) —
    - a. 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
    - b. 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith....
    - c. [propitiation – a wrath-removing sacrifice; remember how this began – with God angry with the human rebellion; Christ’s sacrifice removes the wrath of God for all those who trust in Jesus!]
- F. Chapter 4 – the examples of Abraham and David who were justified by faith
- G. Chapter 5 – Paul begins to recount the great blessings that believers have in being justified by faith in Jesus
  - 1. **Romans 5:1–5** (ESV) —
    - a. 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
    - b. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
    - c. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
    - d. 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,
    - e. 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
  - 2. In Chapter 5 Paul shows how this can be so
    - a. How we, as humans, were identified, united with Adam in Adam’s sin
    - b. But how, in Christ, we are able to receive the benefits of Christ’s righteousness
  - 3. **Romans 5:19–21** (ESV) —
    - a. 19 For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.
    - b. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,
    - c. 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- H. So, what happens next?
  - 1. Well, Paul continues in Chapter 8

2. **Romans 8:1–2** (ESV) —
  - a. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
  - b. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

I. Wait!

1. What happened to Chapters 6 and 7?
  - a. You jumped right from the end of 5 into Chapter 8!
2. That's right – that's the flow of Paul's message of the Gospel

J. **Romans 5:19–21** (ESV) —

1. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
2. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,
3. 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

K. **Romans 8:1–2** (ESV) —

1. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
2. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

L. It just flows together

1. But what about 6 and 7?
2. **Chapters 6 and 7 is a parenthesis**
  - a. A really long parenthesis
  - b. Paul loves parentheses!
3. What's he doing in this parenthesis?
  - a. What's he doing in Chapters 6 and 7?

M. He's sailing

1. He's sailing – piloting his ship between Scylla and Charybdis
2. Between the Scylla of legalism
  - a. And the Charybdis of antinomianism

N. Because once he's laid out the gospel – that though we're condemned by the Law, but saved by grace through faith in Jesus

1. There are those who are saying, “Then why don't we just sin like crazy?”
  - a. Antinomianism
  - b. Chapter 6
2. And then there are those who are saying, “Then what's the law for?”
  - a. Legalism
  - b. Chapter 7

III. **The Inevitable Question**

- A. So, let's go – Chapter 6
- B. Remember how Chapter 5 ended
  1. **Romans 5:20–21** (ESV) —

- a. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,
  - b. 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C. **Romans 6:1 (ESV) —**
- 1. 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?
  - 2. There it is! The antinomian objection!
  - 3. And it's a logical objection
    - a. Sin increased – grace abounded all the more
    - b. So let's keep sinning – so we can have more grace!
  - 4. And since we humans are inclined to sin – it's our nature, apart from the grace of God, to sin
    - a. We're not sinners because we sin; we sin because we're sinners
    - b. By nature
  - 5. So why wouldn't we sin, and sin more and more – since we simply get more grace
    - a. It's both natural and logical for sinners to think like that!
- D. That's the inevitable question

#### IV. **The Invincible Answer**

- A. **Romans 6:2 (ESV) —**
- 1. 2 **By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?**
- B. The question – “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?”
- C. The answer
- 1. He doesn't say, “No, it doesn't work quite like that”
  - 2. He doesn't say, “No, I don't think so”
- D. He says, “No!”
- 1. That's the import of the phrase “By no means!”
  - 2. “No! Are you crazy?”
    - a. He's channeling John McEnroe
    - b. “You can't be serious!”
  - 3. Other translations
    - a. “May it never be!”
    - b. “God forbid!”
    - c. “Of course not!”
    - d. “Certainly not!”
- E. “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?”
- 1. Of course not – that would be the opposite of what God has done in Jesus Christ
  - 2. Christ came to save His people from their sin
    - a. Not just from the penalty of sin
    - b. But from the power of sin, the influence of sin
    - c. And ultimately from the presence of sin

3. So continuing in sin was the last thing on God's mind when He determined to save His people by grace through faith in His Son!
  - a. In fact, it never occurred to God that saved people would keep sinning
  - b. (It only occurs to sinners that saved people would keep sinning!)
- F. But how does this work? Why is it so unthinkable?
  1. "By no means! **How can we who died to sin still live in it?"**
- G. I'm here to tell you that if you're a believer in Jesus, you're pregnant
  1. Yes, that's right – I'm saying that believers in Jesus are pregnant
    - a. And that applies to both men and women
  2. Not biologically!
    - a. Of course not!
    - b. It's a metaphor!
    - c. Do you know what a metaphor is?
  3. Here's what I mean by that
    - a. When you become pregnant, something has happened to you
    - b. But not everything that will happen to you
    - c. When you become a Christian, something has happened to you
    - d. But not everything that will happen to you
- H. If you are a genuine Christian, a believer in Jesus alone for your salvation, something has happened to you
  1. It's not just that you've made a decision (which you certainly have)
    - a. But you've been born again
    - b. A change has taken place in you – a spiritual change
    - c. Just like a change has taken place in a woman who's pregnant
  2. And one of the things that has happened to you when you became a Christian is that you have died to sin
- I. The verb is aorist in the Greek – which means that it took place at a point in time in the past
  1. It's not that you are dying to sin
    - a. Or that you should die to sin
  2. It's that you have died to sin
- J. It means that you are no longer under the dominion of sin, the reign of sin has been broken
  1. Remember: **Romans 5:21** (ESV) — 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
  2. You are no longer under the command of sin; under the obligation to sin
    - a. Sin has lost its power over you
- K. It doesn't mean that you don't sin from time to time
  1. The remnants of the sinful nature are still there; the vestiges of sin are still present
    - a. We will not be without those elements of sin, the presence of sin, until we meet Jesus
  2. But the power of sin has been broken

- a. You have died to sin
  - L. Other things have happened too – just as in pregnancy
    - 1. You now have a love for God you never had
      - a. You now have a desire for righteousness
    - 2. You now begin to see the futility of sin, the destructiveness of sin
      - a. You begin to develop a distaste for sin
    - 3. Just like women who are pregnant
      - a. Some foods they used to love they can't stand
      - b. Some strange foods that they never much liked, they crave!
    - 4. Your affections have radically changed
  - M. So, “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?”
    - 1. “By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”
  - N. If you're a believer in Jesus, you're not going to go back there
    - 1. You're not going to resort to your prior lifestyle
    - 2. You're a new creature in Christ! You've died to sin
  - O. You can't be serious! Continuing in sin?
    - 1. Don't be ridiculous!
- V. **The Incomparable Illustration**
- A. **Romans 6:3-4** (ESV) —
    - 1. 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
    - 2. 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
  - B. **The Meaning of Baptism**
    - 1. First of all, many think this passage has to do with water baptism
      - a. It really doesn't have to do with water baptism
      - b. It has to do with our being identified and united with Jesus Christ
    - 2. There are two words that are generally translated “baptism” in the NT
    - 3. **Bapto (Gk) = to dip, to immerse**
    - 4. **Baptizo (Gk) = used in religious ceremony; symbolizes identification**
    - 5. There was an ancient physician and poet who illustrated the difference
      - a. Nicander (Circa 200 B.C.) – recipe for making pickles
      - b. You first have to bapto (dip) the vegetable in boiling water
      - c. Then you have to baptizo (baptize) the vegetable in a vinegar solution
      - d. It's only the second procedure – the baptism – that essentially changes the vegetable into a pickle
      - e. That process is irreversible
    - 6. Baptizo is the word used in this passage
      - a. What has happened to you is a permanent change in your nature
      - b. You can't be changed back into a cucumber; you will always be a pickle!



7. And when we were baptized into Christ Jesus, we became permanently identified with Christ
    - a. And were baptized into His death
    - b. It's as if we have died with Him
    - c. We've died to sin as we have died with Christ
- C. **Burial and Resurrection**
1. And then it goes a step farther – just to emphasize how permanent is this change
  2. “We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life”
  3. One of the things that made Jesus' resurrection so remarkable (ok, so resurrections are always remarkable) – but spectacularly remarkable, was that He didn't just come alive while on the cross
    - a. He had been buried
    - b. There is a finality in burial
    - c. That's when you bring to a conclusion the entire process of departing this earth
  4. So Paul says, we have died to sin
    - a. We've been united with Christ in His death
    - b. And just like He was buried, so we were buried with Him
    - c. Settling once and for all that sin no longer reigns over us
- D. **New Life in Christ**
1. And the result is new life in Christ
  2. **Romans 6:4** (ESV) —
    - a. 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life.**
  3. Our union with Christ – our identification with Christ – means that we now can walk in newness of life
    - a. In a new walk of righteousness
    - b. With a new spring in our step of holiness
    - c. With a newfound desire to pursue the path of righteousness

## VI. Conclusion

- A. The human race is in rebellion against God
  1. By nature we suppress the truth about God
  2. We are storing up wrath for ourselves
  3. And God is letting us go on our own way as a judgment for our sin
    - a. And the human race is a downward race toward degradation
- B. But God has provided way out – a solution to our sin
  1. In Jesus Christ He has provided His righteousness, so that by grace through faith in Christ we may be saved
    - a. Saved from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and ultimately the presence of sin

2. That's the gospel
- C. But if that's the case, there are those who will ask, "why not continue in sin that grace may abound?"
  1. That's the Charybdis, the maelstrom, of antinomianism
    - a. The antinomianism objection
- D. Paul says, "By no means!"
  1. "Absolutely not!"
  2. That's unthinkable!
    - a. The opposite of what Christ came to do
- E. Because when we became a Christian, something happened to us; something changed in our nature
  1. We died to sin
    - a. While sin used to have its hold on us, that hold is broken
    - b. The reign of sin has ended
    - c. And while sin may still beckon, and often – too often – get our attention
    - d. We are freed from its obligation, its bondage
- F. It's illustrated by baptism
  1. By which we are permanently identified with Jesus Christ
    - a. Identified with Him in His death
    - b. Identified with Him in His burial
    - c. And in His resurrection
  2. While this is not primarily about water baptism, believers' water baptism does illustrate the part about being buried – under the water
    - a. And raised in newness of life – coming up out of the water
- G. So ultimately, we long to live lives of newfound devotion and holiness in the presence of God