

## Identification

*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

*Romans 6:3-5*

There is great reason to celebrate the magnificent work of the Son of God in purchasing redemption for all who believe, through His unfathomable suffering and His glorious resurrection. Yet beyond celebration, when we have believed unto salvation, our text reminds us of the personal identification that becomes ours. The baptism described here has a two-fold application. It at once carries with it the symbolism of physical water baptism, but more significantly the counterpart of spiritual baptism. But the initiating baptism was His own, not only of symbolic water, but of His whole humanity into His passion. When we attempt to comprehend the immensity of His suffering, to pay our sin-debt and to satisfy righteousness, our humanity recognizes its limitations. Yet such an attempt of faith also stirs up a spirit of gratitude and love for such a Savior, that we can with the apostle express our desire to know the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. Then we can be willing to welcome the rejection of the world, as He promised would be the case for His disciples. We can also share in a love for Him that can answer with the apostle, twice in this chapter, "God forbid!" when confronted with the false notion that grace might allow us to sin.

At the same time, the identification extends to the power of His resurrection, which we also long to know, not only in the grandeur of a promise for a blissful eternity in His presence, but also in our daily walk in newness of life, in the presence of His Spirit. Note that the apostle here makes the indivisible connection between the identification with both His death and life. As we own that newness of life with Him, the balance of this chapter reminds us of the power of His resurrection that enables us to live unto righteousness. Because He lives, we shall live also. And because death hath no more dominion over Him, so sin shall not have dominion over us; for He satisfied the righteousness of the law that would have condemned us, and empowers us to serve His righteousness. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22). Let us say with the hymnwriter, Such love, such wondrous love!