

LENT DEVOTIONAL



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Miller Summer Youth Institute

Metro-Urban Institute

World Mission Initiative

Zeitah Excavations

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LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 8, 2020

SCRIPTURE

ROMANS 6:3-14

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For whoever has died is freed from sin. 8 But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. 13 No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Dr. William R. Myers '67, Academia (2010)

In this passage from Romans 6, Paul tells us to offer our bodies to God for use as “weapons to do right” (v. 13, the Common English Bible), or as “instruments of righteousness” (NRSV). Paul believes that the God of creation does not want us to be enslaved in a culture of death.

By faith, Paul claims that through baptism we are freed from death-like existence and called into grace-filled living—God’s promised newness of life. Death is said no longer to have power or dominion over us. No longer slaves in a culture of death, we stand before God as people once gripped by death and now reborn into the fullness of life.

Paul embodies the risk entailed in living this kind of life, but here he is content to ask why such a rebirth surprises us. Is it not what we saw in Jesus, whom we confess to be the Christ? This man went to the cross and died not only for us, but also for the world. Paul claims that, like Christ, we also die but are resurrected and reborn into God’s newness of life. In a deep sense, we are converted from the fear of death into this new way of living. The person we used to be is crucified in order “to get rid of the corpse that had been controlled by sin” (v. 6, Common English Bible). Given this conversion from death to life, the evil and threat of death still present in the world have no power in our lives because—whatever the immediate and bodily cost—we live under God’s grace.

By God’s grace, death no longer has power over what we are called to be and do. We still live within a world that often honors death, power, greed, and violence. In our leaving the fear of such things, Paul claims our lives are now entwined with this God of love. As such, we are to be active persons of God’s grace in this world. Such a radical demarcation relocates us and informs us, thus affirming our bodies as “weapons to do right” by becoming God’s “instruments of righteousness.”

PRAYER

Creator God, our lives are in your hands. In Jesus, whom we know as the Christ, you have chosen to enter this world. He went to the cross, died, was resurrected, and lives as a radical claim in the face of the world’s culture of death. Living into our baptismal vows, we ask that you continue to be with us as we lean into this world’s future. Be with us in who we are and in what we do. In Christ’s name, amen.

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