

INTRODUCTION

I'm sure you have all heard lawyer jokes. There are plenty of them, but it is said when the American humorist, Will Rogers, was walking through a cemetery one day, he saw a tombstone that said, "Here lies a lawyer, and an honest man." Will said, "What do you know? There must be two men buried in that grave." Well, there are a lot of people buried in the grave of baptism we are going to be talking about today among other things.

Look in Romans chapter 6 and let's read the first seven verses. Paul has just been talking about sin and grace. "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" In verse 2 he uses one of the strongest negative interjections in the Greek language. He says, "No way! Absolutely not! By no means!" he writes. "We died to sin: how can we live in it any longer? 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. 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," the King James Version says "the old man," not talking about your husband or your father, "your old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."

This text addresses Christians who have been born again and it describes what has happened to us. I'll remind you this is not about things that ought to happen to you. These are not things you ought to try to do. These are things that are true realities in your life if you are born again. There are three things Paul talks about. He talks about our death to sin. Look again at verse 2. It says very plainly, "We died to sin." Now I hope some of you right now are thinking about that, and you are saying, "WOW! Does that mean that once I become a Christian I never sin again? I never think a sinful thought or I never commit a sinful deed? If that's the case, I'm in a heap of trouble!" Well, that's not what it means. But it means sin that once was your master, and you were in bondage to sin, that master has died and you are no longer under the grip of sin. What happens to a Christian as relates to sin? Let's notice two things.

I. WHEN WE ARE BORN AGAIN:

1. Our awareness of sin is awakened

First of all, when we are born again, our awareness of sin is awakened. In other words, maybe some of you can remember before you became a Christian. You could commit sinful acts, and you didn't really know or didn't really care whether it was sin or not. Once you are born into the family of God and you pass from death unto life, suddenly, you are aware of what sin is and what sin is not. A person who is not a believer can sin and just about all they will experience is perhaps a dull ache of their conscience. When you become a Christian, instead of some dull ache in your conscience, it is a sharp pang of the conviction of the holy spirit. That's what King David experienced in Psalm 51. "For I know that my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." Do you know what David was saying? Because he was a redeemed person, a man after God's own heart when he

had committed this sin of adultery, and murder, and lying, he said, "When I go to bed at night, that sin is ever before me. When I wake in the middle of the night, I see that sin in front of me, and when I get up the next morning, that sin is there in front of me." A person who is not a Christian does not really struggle with any awareness of sin. They are just having a great time. They can sin and enjoy it, but a Christian can never, NEVER sin and really enjoy it.

Of course, a lot of people have already asked me this week. "Well now, Brother David, what do you think about our President and all of his acknowledgments? I think it has to do with sin, don't you agree?" It doesn't matter what I think about it. It doesn't really matter what *you* think about it. What really matters is what God thinks about it. I don't even want to address what he has done or what he has said. Let's set it aside. I *do* want to address something that is much more disturbing to me. Have you been listening to the Time-Warner Poll and *USA Today* polls? What disturbs me is that you and I today live in a culture where a majority of Americans seem to say, "Well, it's okay. Its sin, but it's okay. Everybody is doing it. It is accepted today." Ladies and gentlemen when we start letting public opinion polls determine right and wrong, morality, good and bad, that's just a sign of the moral decay and decline to which our nation has sunk. You see, it doesn't matter what the popular opinion polls say, and it doesn't matter what I think or what you think. What does matter is what God says about sin and what Bible says, "For a Christian, we have died to sin, and suddenly we are aware of sin when it's in our life."

2. Our desire to sin is diminished

The second thing, not only is our awareness of sin awakened but our desire to sin is diminished. That's not saying it ought to be that way, that's just an accepted fact in the scriptures. Once you are born of God, you will not have the same desire to sin. It's like this: Here's a person who is not a Christian. They want to sin. They are running after sin. But, for those of us who know Christ, we're not running after sin, we are running *from* sin. We are fleeing from, the Bible says, "youthful lust," and we no longer want to sin. Sometimes these brothers and sisters who do not believe as we believe in the security of a believer sometimes called, "once saved, always saved." Sometimes they say to us who are Baptists, "Well, if I believed what you Baptists believe about once saved, always saved, I'd go out and sin all I want to, and then I'd know I'd still go to heaven." The truth of the matter is I sin more than I want to. The truth is I don't want to sin anymore. If you want to, you have to decide, "Have I ever truly been born of God?" I guarantee you when you become a Christian, God takes that "wanna" out of you, and puts a "don't wanna" there when it comes to sin. You are changed from within.

Look what the Bible says in 1 John, 3:9. This is one of the most misunderstood, but one of the most powerful truths. "No one who is born of God will continue to sin." That doesn't mean you won't stumble or fall into sinful thoughts and deeds. It means it is no longer a possibility for it to be a continual lifestyle. "No one who is born of God will continue to sin because." Why? Because of God's seed remains in him. If you want to use another word there, use God's nature. He cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God. Let me tell you what that means. That means when you are born into the family of God, you receive the holy nature of God.

The same can also be said physically speaking. I don't know about you, but some of us who have reached "middle age" tend to look into the mirror. Maybe some of you ladies have had the

experience of looking into the mirror and saying, "Hey, that's my mother in that mirror." Not too long ago I was looking in the mirror, and I said, "What's my daddy doing in my mirror looking back at me?" It's like the Eric Clapton song, "I'm looking into my father's eyes." When you look at me, I have this little cleft in my head. Have you ever noticed it? Do you know why I have it? My daddy had one exactly like it. Do you know why I am kind of stocky? Because my dad was built exactly the same way. When I was born into his family, I received that DNA, and I have his nature. Well, when we are born into the family of God, it says God's nature is in us and we receive this heavenly DNA this Divine Nature and Attributes of God You have that inside of you. The Holy Spirit lives inside of you. If you as a Christian try to go on sinning, that Holy Spirit pitches a holy fit inside you! And you just can't do it. It's impossible.

Some people think, "Well, Christians can become sinlessly perfect." That's like the preacher who was preaching along one time and said, "Nobody's perfect. I've never met a perfect person. A perfect person doesn't exist." Then he even says, "Has anybody in this room ever met a perfect person?" One guy in the back kind of sheepishly held up his hand. The preacher said, "Sir, have you ever met a perfect person?" The man said, "Well, I've never met him, but I hear about him all the time." The preacher said, "Who is it?" He said, "It's my wife's first husband." He's not perfect. Nobody's perfect. But listen, I'll grant it. There are some wonderful, wonderful, wonderful Christian brothers and sisters. They call themselves Holiness, and they believe you can experience a state of sanctification where you become sinlessly perfect.

Some of you have heard of Dr. Ray Stedman, who is with the Lord now. For many years he was a great Bible preacher in San Francisco. One day, Ray was in the Midwest doing a Bible conference, and he need a haircut so he walked into a barber shop off the street. The barber didn't know who Ray was, and Ray didn't tell him. They started talking about spiritual things, and the discussion got around to sin. As the barber was cutting Ray's hair, he happened to say, "Well, I haven't committed a sin in fifteen years. I've attained the state of sinless perfection." Dr. Stedman said, "Is that right?" The barber said, "That's right." Ray Stedman said, "Well, I guess you know the Bible." He says, "Yes sir, I know the Bible." Ray Stedman said, "Well do you believe the scripture that says, 'For him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.'" The barber said, "I sure do believe that." Ray Stedman just started quoting scripture after scripture about things Christians ought to do continually. He would quote the scripture, and he would say to that barber, "Do you do that all the time?" The barber says, "Well, not all the time." Ray Stedman said, "That's sin, brother." He'd quote another scripture. "Do you do that all the time?" "Well no." "That's sin, brother." It just went on and on. The barber got mad! Finally, he was just angry and Ray said, "Brother, you are angry at me, and brother, that's a sin right there too!" Ray Stedman said it was the worst haircut he ever got in his life.

I love and respect those people who say they have reached that state of sinless perfection, but I don't think it is possible this side of glory. I think that's why Paul writes in Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will keep on completing it until the day of Jesus Christ." God's never through with you until he takes you home. You can be sure of two things: Your awareness of sin is awakened and your desire to sin is lessened.

II. OUR BURIAL THROUGH BAPTISM

Here’s the second truth in this passage of scripture: Our burial through baptism. All of us who have been born again, and have been obedient to the Lord in baptism have all been buried in one grave, the watery grave of baptism. Look at verse 4. This is probably the best one-verse discussion of baptism in all the Bible. “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.” You would think that for those of us who call ourselves “Baptists” that the issue and teaching about baptism would be pretty significant—and it is! Sometimes people wonder, “Pastor, why do we have all these denominations anyway? Why do we have Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians and all that?” Well, it’s basically because through the centuries people have come up with different ideas about things like the Lord’s Supper, baptism, the nature of the church, and when they disagreed they went out and started little arms of the church, but we are all brothers and sisters in Christ who name the name of Jesus. You can imagine that we as Baptists have some pretty strong Bible beliefs about what baptism is. Romans 6:4 is the cornerstone for what we believe about baptism.

1. New Testament baptism must be correct in its message: A believer who professes faith NOT an infant being dedicated

Let me tell you three things. New Testament baptism must be correct in its message. In order for it to be correct, it must be correct in its message—in other words, the message it communicates, and this is it: A believer who professes faith, not an infant being dedicated. I say that realizing that there are perhaps many of you that if somebody were to ask you, “Have you been baptized?” You would say, “Sure, I was baptized as a baby.” which means you came out of a tradition that sprinkles newborn babies and calls it baptism. I want to say to you that without a doubt your parents loved you so much they were sincere in their desire to dedicate you to the care and keeping of the Lord. Probably based upon what they knew and had been taught, they thought that was baptism. I just want to challenge every one of you to consider the word of God. Here’s my challenge and I say this with love; go through the New Testament. Find one infant who was ever baptized, and I will pay you \$1,000 if you need some motivation. But you can save yourself some time. It’s not in there. You won’t find it.

You say, “Well, why did that ever start?” First of all, it didn’t start until about 400 years after Jesus ascended into heaven. Five years ago, I preached a message from this pulpit on baptism and I went into the historical background at length. I am not going to do that this morning. If you want to know more about how the church started sprinkling infants, get that tape. Needless to say, you’ll never find it anywhere in the Bible. It’s important when newborn children come into your family that you dedicate them to the Lord, but that’s not the same thing as baptism. You need to understand that. Baptism is the public profession of faith of a believer. You must be old enough to personally put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ to profess that faith.

I’m not picking on anybody else. If you want me to pick on somebody, I’ll pick on the Baptists. We have made a doctrine out of walking down the aisle. Find for me in the Bible where it says anybody has to walk down an aisle. You won’t find that either. We have mistaken walking down an aisle for a public profession of faith when in the New Testament baptism was always the public profession of faith of a believer. In church history in the Bible it was always the way a person publicly said, “I am renouncing my old life that old life is dead and now, I am identifying

with Jesus Christ in his death, burial and resurrection, and I am a follower of Jesus Christ.” By the way, that’s important to do. If you are listening to me, and you have not yet publicly professed your faith through New Testament baptism, that is something you need to do. You say, “Well, I don’t really feel like I need to do that.” Well, it’s not a “feeling” issue it’s just an obedience issue. If you wait until you feel like getting baptized, you probably never will get baptized. It’s something you do because you obey the Lord. So, it always has to be correct in its message.

2. New Testament baptism must be correct in its mode: Total immersion NOT sprinkling

Number two, New Testament baptism must be correct in its mode. In other words, how it is done. What is the correct mode in the New Testament? It is “total immersion,” not sprinkling. You ask, “Well, how did they ever start sprinkling in the first place?” It just became a matter of convenience for the Roman Catholic Church when they started declaring that every member of the Roman Empire was a Christian. They would just sprinkle water on troops as they went out. So, they said, “Well, let’s just make it more convenient. We’ll just do it to babies when they are born.” It never was anything taught or practiced by the early Christians in the church.

Here’s the reason why I say it is “total immersion.” Do you see that word, *baptizo*? That’s the Greek word. *Baptizo* always means to plunge, to immerse, to dip. That is the Greek word. Now, listen, you may be amazed. It was never a spiritual word to start with. It was a common word in the Greek language. For instance, when ladies went down to the river to wash their clothes, it was the same word They baptized their clothes into the water. They immersed it. It was used very regularly. A fabric that was being dyed was soaked in the dye to change its color, and that word was used they would *baptizo* the fabric. It’s even used in Greek literature of a soldier taking his sword, and baptizing his sword into his enemy. Do you think he “sprinkled” the sword over his enemy? No, he immersed it. He plunged it into his enemy. That’s what the word means in its basic meaning.

You say, “Well, when they were translating that word, why didn’t they translate it correctly?” There’s an interesting historical footnote. I’m sure all of you know all of this about history. I’m not telling you anything new. Do you remember Mary, Queen of Scots? She had a son named James who was James VI of Scotland, but in 1604 he became James I, King of England. James was a devout man, and he wanted the Bible to be translated into the common language of the sophisticated people, which was Elizabethan English, so in 1609 he commissioned 54 of the brightest English Hebrew and Greek scholars to translate the Bible into what we now call the King James Version. It took them two years to do it. Well, as they were translating along, and they come to the word *baptizo*. They were supposed to take Greek words and translate them into English, but when they came to that word they said, “Uh oh! We have a problem. If we translate that word as “immerse,” “dip,” “plunge” we may be in trouble. King James has not been immersed. He was *sprinkled* in the Church of England. His mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, was sprinkled. We had better not translate it as “immerse.” If we do that, we are saying King James is wrong, and King James’ mother is wrong, and the whole Church of England is wrong, and the whole Roman Catholic Church is wrong. So, what are we going to do?” Well, they probably thought, “Let’s just translate it ‘sprinkled,’ but they didn’t do that because there is a totally different word *rhantizo* in Greek for “sprinkle.” They didn’t want to translate it “pour” because

there is a different word in Greek *aluo* that means "to pour." If they translated it as "sprinkle" or "pour," anybody in that time who knew Greek would have laughed them out of all the academic circles. So, if you want to know the truth, they "copped out." They didn't translate the word *baptizo*, they just transliterated it. They just made it into an English word. "*Baptizo*, let's just make it the word 'baptize.'" Did you know there was no English word, "baptize" until the King James Bible was translated? Now, we have that word and we use it a lot, don't we? Baptists, baptism, baptize. Truthfully, I'm kind of glad they didn't translate it "plunge," because if they had we would have been Green Acres Plunger Church. We're going to have a plunging tonight at our six o'clock service. I think baptism sounds great. Just think about poor, old John the Baptist it wouldn't have been right to call him, John, the Dipper, would it? As long as you understand the true meaning of the word is "immerse," that's okay.

3. New Testament baptism must be correct in its meaning: A symbol of burial and resurrection NOT A sacrament for salvation

Here's the third thing about baptism that must be correct. That is, the meaning. It is a symbol of burial and resurrection, not a sacrament for salvation. You ask, "Does anybody use it as a sacrament for salvation?" Yes. It's kind of interesting. You have the Roman Catholic Church that teaches baptism confers grace. Let me quote from their Council of Trent. This is Roman Catholic dogma. It says, "Baptism is not merely a sign of grace, but actually contains it and confers it on the person being baptized." They teach it is a sacrament. We all have Church of Christ friends, people who know the Lord and love the Lord and are so true to the Bible, teach that baptism is a regenerative act, the act of salvation. Those folks, many of them, teach that you have to be baptized. Until you are baptized, you are not saved. It's interesting that the Church of Christ and the Roman Catholics are strange bedfellows when it comes to that doctrine. It wasn't until the 19th century that Alexander Campbell broke away from the Baptist church and founded what we today call the Church of Christ. That's was the main point of his breaking away from the Baptist church in the 19th century.

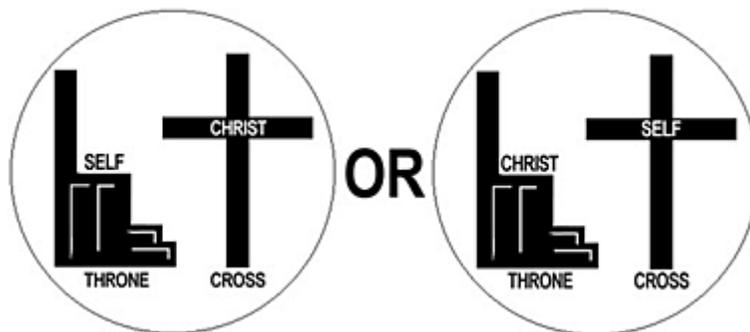
I don't believe baptism is something that causes salvation. I think it is a beautiful picture, an outward picture of what has happened on the inside. That's why we immerse. It's a picture of burial. When you go under the water, it's a picture of who you used to be, your old life is being buried. When you come up out of the water, it's a picture of the new person you are in Jesus Christ, which leads us to the third thing in this passage

III. OUR RESURRECTION TO NEW LIFE

1. My "old self" was crucified

Number three, our resurrection to new life. Frankly, the words die, death, burial, grave those are all pejorative, negative terms. But resurrection is a good word. What it says is, "we're buried with him in baptism; we're raised to walk a new life." Two things happen. Number one, my old self was crucified. Look at verse 6 again. It says, "for we know that our old self was crucified." Now, what does that mean? When you and I are born physically, we are born with a sin nature, a selfish nature. You can call it self. When we become a Christian, that "self nature" is placed on

the cross with Jesus. The only thing is it’s not dead forever. It keeps trying to crawl back into our life.



If you’ll look at the two diagrams there for you, hopefully, a picture is worth a thousand words, and I’ll save you a thousand words there. Look at the picture on the right. That’s ideal. That’s the way it ought to be in my life and your life every day. We keep Christ on the throne of our life, and when Christ is on the throne, self, our selfish, sinful, egotistical nature, is on the cross, dead. But, look at the picture on the left. For many of us this happens more than we would like to admit; sometimes we enthrone “self,” and we start calling our own shots. When we do that, what we actually do is put Christ back on the cross. There is only room on the throne of your life for one, either “you” or Christ. So “self” is crucified.

I don’t know about you, but I struggle with temptation, and I struggle with sin. So does the apostle Paul. In chapter 7 he’s going to say, “The things I want to do, I don’t do.” What does that mean? It means this old, self, this old sinful nature keeps trying to resurrect itself and take control. When I was growing up in South Alabama, we had a big lake we swam in. This was before the days of Nintendo or all those computer games. We had to entertain ourselves so we used to get out there and float on the lake. This was also before the days of these nice fancy floats that look like all kinds of animals and things. What did we use for floats? Inner tubes. The very best ones were big, old truck tire inner tubes, those big old round black ones. We’d get out there, and I’ll guarantee you, four or five of us guys could entertain ourselves all afternoon on one of those truck tire inner tubes. Do you know what we tried to do? We tried to sink that thing. Do you know how we would do it? We’d stand on it, put our arms around each other, and we’d try to balance on it, and tried to sink it and hold it on the bottom of the lake. It was tough to do! Do you know what happened? You let somebody slip off, and what’s that thing going to do, it’s going to throw you off. Throw everybody off. Well, it didn’t take much to entertain us, anyway, but we could entertain ourselves all afternoon doing that. Now, in my life I try to keep that old, sinful nature submerged, dead and buried but it’s like that old truck tire inner tube, isn’t it? It keeps popping up, keeps popping up, keeps popping up. That’s why it is a daily experience of reckoning yourself to be dead.

- 2. My “new life” includes a:**
- a. New heart**
 - b. New attitude**
 - c. New song**

d. New name
e. New creation

Here's the second thing. My old life is dead. My new life includes a new heart. You get a new heart when you come to Christ. Number two, you get a new mind, the renewing of your mind. You think things differently. Number three, you get a new song. The Bible says, "God put a new song in my mouth." Number four, you get a new name! Revelation 2:17 says, "He that overcomes I will give a white stone with a new name written on it which no man knows." You probably have a name for your mate that nobody else uses. That signifies an intimacy that you have with no one else. When you know Jesus and you love Jesus and you attain that spiritual intimacy, you will have that kind of relationship. Number five, you become a new creation. It says, "If any person is in Christ, they are a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new." You died to sin, you were buried in baptism, but now you are a new person. Don't you like new things? I do.

CONCLUSION

Let me finish with this. See if you recognize this Bible story. It's in John 11. This fellow by the name of Lazarus is dead. Not only is he dead, he has been dead for four days, and Jesus is contemplating rolling the stone away from the tomb, and do you know what Martha, the sister of the deceased says? "Lord, don't do that, because after four days, he stinks." Well, that's just an observation. Flesh decays and corrupts, and it produces a terrible odor. But Jesus was not deterred. With a tear-stained face because the Bible says, "Jesus wept." he looked up to heaven and prayed. We don't know what he said, but then he turned and he looked at that tomb, and he said, "Lazarus, come forth. Come out of there, Lazarus." You have to remember that back in those tombs in those days, they often put a number of corpses in the same tomb and then rolled the stone over it. They heard a rustle, they heard a wiggle, they detected some movement in the dark tomb, and before long, stepping into the door of that tomb was something that would have scared every one of us slap to death. It was a mummified Lazarus. The Bible says he was wrapped up in strips of cloth, the old grave clothes they soaked in ointment. After four days, don't you know those grave clothes stunk too? Jesus said, "Take those grave clothes off of him. Let him go. Loosen him." In the next scene they are eating supper. That's how we know Lazarus was a Baptist because after church they ate supper. Right? Here they are sitting at a meal. This is all in the Bible. After they had eaten a meal, Lazarus says, "Lord, thanks for bringing me back to life, and I enjoyed this meal, but Lord, I think I kind of miss those old corpses, so if you don't mind, I'm going to excuse myself and I'm going to go back and I'm going to take all those old strips of cloth and I'm going to wrap them back around me. Then, I am going to go over there to that tomb, and I'm going to walk back in that dark tomb and I'm going to lay down on that slab because you know I just enjoyed being with all those folks." Did you catch where I just kind of departed from the story there? That didn't happen at all. That would be strange wouldn't it, if Lazarus had said, "I want to go back to the grave, to the stink, to the darkness, to death. Wouldn't that have been strange?"

That's why I can't figure out why some people who name the name of Jesus still pray for the old things of the world and the old companions of the world, and the old habits of the world. I want to tell you. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus. So, live like it.

OUTLINE

I. When we are born again:

1. Our awareness of sin is awakened

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. *Psalm 51:3-4*

2. Our desire to sin is diminished

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God. *John 3:9*

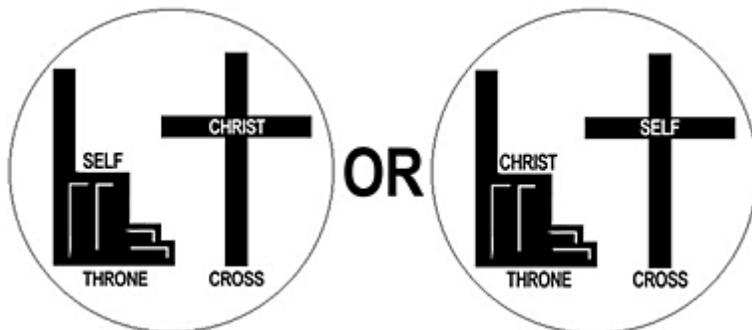
II. OUR BURIAL THROUGH BAPTISM

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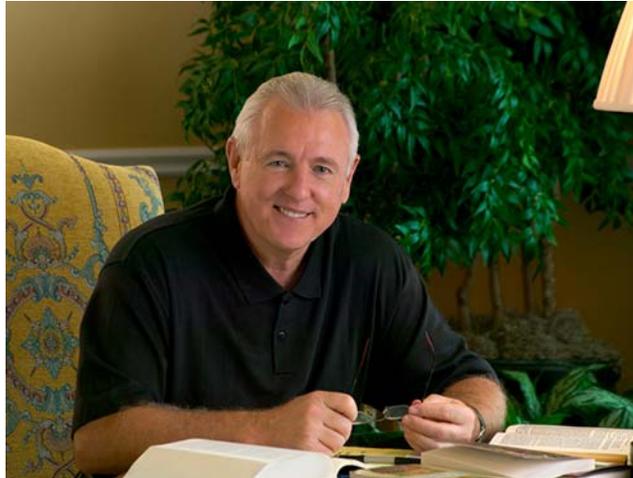
III. OUR RESURRECTION TO NEW LIFE

1. My “old self” was crucified



2. My “new life” includes a:

- a. New heart (Ezekiel 36:26)
- b. New attitude (Romans 12:2)
- c. New song (Psalm 40:3)
- d. New name (Revelation 2:17)
- e. New creation (II Corinthians 5:17)



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes