

Through Baptism we are made God's children.

The Apostle Paul makes the startling assertion that where sin increased, God's grace in Christ increased *all the more*, (Romans 5:20). Paul anticipates a perverse logic that might reason: If that's the case, then why not go on sinning so that grace will increase even more? Paul heads that thought off in no uncertain terms with his curt response, "*How shall we, who died to sin, live any longer in it?*" (Rom. 6:2).

But how did we die to sin? Paul answers this question with another question - the answer to which is self-evident: "*Or do you not know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death?*" he asks (6:3). Note the major assumption on Paul's part that Baptism is a means of grace. Baptism is effective in doing something. It accomplishes something. What Baptism does is put the baptised person in touch with Christ, or, to be more specific, it makes the baptised person a partner in Christ's death and burial. "*Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death,*" (6:4). This close connection with Christ through Baptism is a theme that will be repeated over and over again. In fact, the prepositional phrase "*with Him*" occurs five times in verses 4 to 8.

A second major assumption on Paul's part is that being connected "*with Him* [Christ]" makes a difference. Through Baptism we were buried with Him into death "*so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might begin to live a new life,*" (6:4). Recall that Christ's death and resurrection were the basis of the righteousness that the Father credited *to us* to make us children of God, fit for His kingdom.