

# Sermon for The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

**Date:** July 19, 2020

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Jeremiah 20:7-13

**Epistle Reading:** Romans 6: [1-11] 12-23



**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

**Sermon Text:** Romans 6:12-23

**Sermon Title:** Baptized into God's Greater Story (*The GGS Series*)

**Introit:** Psalm 86:11-15; Antiphon: Psalm 86:6

## Hymns:

LSB 570 – Just as I Am, without One Plea

LSB 555 – Salvation unto Us Has Come  
(v.1,5,6,10)

LSB 837 – Lift High the Cross (v.1,4,5,6)

LSB 685 – Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

## Songs:

The Wonderful Cross

Shine Jesus Shine

Holy is the Lord

Worthy is the Lamb

Shout To The Lord

## Liturgy:

Divine Service IV

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



Pastor James Groleau  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
1200 13th Avenue NW  
Austin, MN 55912  
Office: (507) 433-2642  
Shepherd@JamesPlace.net  
StJohnsAustinLCMS.org  
FaceBook.com/StJohnsAustin  
Twitter.com@StJohnsAustinMN  
FaceBook.com/Shepherd.James.Groleau  
KAUS 1480 AM Sun. 9:00am



## **Text: Romans 6:12–23**

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**NOTE: Copyright** information.

Bible Translation: GOD'S WORD®, © 1995 God's Word to the Nations. Some readings have been adapted to better reflect the original Greek or Hebrew.  
Sermon Series by: The Rev. Dr. David Schmitt, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Credit for Images:

Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

© 2020 Pastor James Groleau.

Permission is granted to use these sermons for any non-profit purpose. I only ask that credit, as to their origination, be noted appropriately.

May God's grace and mercy flow over you all the days of your life. Amen.

Today we begin a new sermon series called God's Greater Story. We start in the middle of a book; the book of Romans. Romans six to be specific. That might seem strange to start a sermon series in the middle of a letter. You'd think it would make more sense to start at the beginning. To hear Paul, introducing himself, and then follow the flow of the letter, but we are going to start with Romans chapter six. Why? Because sometimes that's the way God works. We are brought into the middle of an on-going story.

When you were born you entered a world that was already in motion. You didn't know who people were as they passed you from person to person. People wanted to hold you and point at your face. You didn't know any of these people. Over time, however, you recognize voices and put together stories. Strangers became familiar family. That's the way it is with God. His work does not start with you. You were brought into God's ongoing family.

You weren't there at the very beginning. God alone existed. He existed before anything else was made. God alone created this world out of nothing. He spoke and all that is appeared. Mountains soared. Waves crashed. All of it. After preparing a place for us to discover, after preparing a garden in which we could live, after preparing food for us to eat, day and night for us to rise and sleep, God took the dust of the earth, and formed us. He fashioned us. He breathed, into that dust and mud, the breath of life. God made Adam and Eve and brought them into His ongoing story.

What God did at creation, He continues to do in the life of each and every one of us as individuals. Even though Adam and Eve sinned and brought death and, the punishment of sin into the world, God continued to work. He sent His Son Jesus, to pay the punishment of death, and to prepare a place for each one of us, His people. A new creation. A place free from death. A place where God's people will rejoice and relax in the goodness of God and the wonder of a new creation.

In Baptism, God brings people into His ongoing story. God gathers people from all ages and places on the earth, from all languages and cultures. He bring them all into His kingdom. The infant in arms and the aged on their bed. Those who speak every language you can think of, and many more you can't. He brings those who gather water from wells and those who keep it bottled in their fridge. God brings all people into His story through the water of Holy Baptism.

In Baptism we are joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus and there we enter the ongoing story. We come into the middle. This story reaches back to before

creation, when God loved us before the foundations of the world were laid, and this story reaches forward, into eternity, to a new creation when Jesus will return and make all things new.

God's story doesn't begin and end with you, but it does include you; you specifically; you one God calls by name. By grace, you have a place and a purpose and you are part of a people called the people of God. To understand that, to understand how God brings you into His much greater story, it is helpful to start in the middle of Paul's letter to the congregations in Rome. Because there Paul brings you to the waters of Baptism and there you see what it means to be buried into the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Paul describes this very moment most clearly when he writes:

The death He [*Jesus*] died, He died to sin once for all;  
but the life He lives, He lives to God. So, you also must  
consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ  
Jesus.

Dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus. That is what you are. That is a challenge to grasp. God's work is eternal. This promise of God is certain and lasts for all eternity. It's hard for us to hold on to that truth, that truth of who we are in this crazy mixed up world. It's as if this is only a moment for us.

Ask anyone about their Christian life experience and I bet these are not the first words you would think of. Romans 6 is not our generally a favorite verses. Folks will often talk about their Christian walk, and they will quote Paul, but they quote Romans 7:

The good that I would do, I do not,  
and the evil that I would not do, that I do.

This life of struggle, this internal division, this fighting of flesh and the spirit, this is the way of life for us and how we think our about Christian life.

Paul asks us to pause for a moment, to say something else about ourselves. Paul says:

Consider yourselves dead to sin  
and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Too often we dismiss our Baptism as something insignificant and many year ago. Quaint, not quite important. Paul asks us to take a deep long look into the reflective pool of Holy Baptism. There we see our reflection in the water and learn to say:

I am dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Think about that for a moment. Paul has described sin with power and force. It is sin that enslaves, sin that imprisons, and sin that has dominion over us. Paul says, “consider yourselves dead to sin.” Paul has described God in wonder and power in this letter.

This is the God who created all things; the God who rose from the dead; the God who now reigns in the glory and wonder of Heaven; the God who sends His Holy Spirit to His people; the God who frees; the God who lives; the God who brings about a marvelous new

creation. Paul says consider yourselves alive to that God, in Jesus. Dead to sin and alive to God, in Jesus.

For Paul this is the very meaning and reason for our Baptism. That’s why he says:

We were buried with Him in Baptism to His death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. So, consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Do you see how different Paul’s ways are from the ways of the world. Our world recognizes the power of sin, but it fights sin by asking us to remember it. If we can remember it we will avoid it. Paul offers another way.

As you read through the book of Romans you find that Paul takes you down a dark hallway, and sets before you the intensity of human sin. You see the power of sin in, and over, the world. The power of sin in your own life. It affects everyone. No one is free from its dominion. All stand soiled before God, but Paul does not stop there. Paul goes further.

The place He takes you is one where the the record books are blank. He takes you to a small puddle of water in a bowl. Paul takes you to the very moment of Baptism when you were drown to death and buried with Christ.

Deeper than our sin, and darker than our suffering, lies the suffering of God. The death of Jesus for the sins of the whole world. That death is the punishment for sin. It was paid. Then something happened. A resurrection from the dead. This resurrection is life and light for the world.

Arise, shine, for your light has come  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

God has entered your world, taken your sin on Himself, and in His resurrection, raised you to life.

Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, you too walk in newness of life.

Paul brings us from the record of our sin that plays over and over in our hearts and minds, to the wonderful reality of the death and resurrection of our Savior, who takes us by the hand and leads us safely home. Home to a place where we are brought into His kingdom and we live as children of God.

That is why Paul calls on the us to present ourselves to Jesus as people who have been brought from death to life. We present our bodies, our minds, our skills, our talents and everything, as instruments for righteousness.

There is a beautiful mystery to being part of God's story. We often find ourselves amazed at what God will do. We bring our lives to God, present ourselves to Him, and God uses our lives in the unfolding of His story in His kingdom. There is no telling what God will do through you as He works in the world to save His children.

As you now stand before God, about to leave this Shelter of the Lord and enter the world, you can have courage, you can have joy. You have the privilege of saying:

“I am dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

This you can declare with boldness. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God's love and  
Serve all people**

