

“Living a New Life” ◆Romans 6:4-11

Baptism is a rite that symbolizes a life in which the old self dies in the water and 4 “live a new life” being united to Christ. There is nothing magical about baptism, like a spell. It is a decision and a testimony of 8 “living with Christ”, who was risen. In Paul’s time, there was a secret religion. The gospel shared the same goal of dying with some god and being resurrected with that god. However, it is said that the clandestine religions followed a natural phenomenon (the annual harvest of crops). There was also a religion called Phrygia, in which a goddess took pity on a dead male god and resurrected him, making him an omnipotent god. Paul, in response to these seemingly superstitious religions, urges people to participate in the atoning death on the cross and three-day resurrection of Christ, a historical figure. Esoteric religions emphasized exorcism for the sustaining of the new birth. It was not an ethical way of life that required the will of the believer. Paul insists on 6 “not being enslaved to sin,” that is, a way of life that does not blindly cling only to the fact that one has been baptized (concern for the weak. Belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, footwear of peace, etc., Eph. 6:10-17). Of course, it would be tough for us, the people of this world, to “live a new life” down to unessential details. Paul, well aware of human limitations, follows up with 11 “Consider that you are living for God.

It reminds me of my childhood when I hiked in the mountains with a lowly magnet. When it was in motion, its needle would oscillate, though it never pointed opposite south. When it stopped, it would point north and stand still. I am a man of many losing, but I want to walk toward God.