

**Devotional Thoughts :: More on the Resurrection and Justification by Bob Hoekstra**

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buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses...He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses. (Colossians 2:12-13)

These truth-packed verses unfold the role of the resurrection as we started out with God through justification, when He declared us righteous in Christ. In this initial work of the Lord on our behalf, we were "buried with Him in baptism." Here, baptism is referring to our identification with Christ. When we first believed on the Lord Jesus, we were joined to Him, made one with Him, identified with Him. "We have been united together in the likeness of His death" (Romans 6:5). From God's perspective, we who trusted in Jesus Christ died on the cross with Him and were buried in the tomb with Him. Water baptism bears testimony to this truth. Identification with Christ makes this our spiritual history before God. In God's sight, our old life was crucified and buried.

Through faith in Christ and our identification with Him, we were also raised from the tomb with Jesus. "In which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Just as His death became our death through identification, so also His resurrection became our resurrection. "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" (Romans 6:5). In God's sight, we were raised to a new life in Christ. "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Colossians 2:13 offers another aspect of our need for a personal spiritual resurrection. "And you, being dead in your trespasses...He has made alive together with Him." Before we were justified through faith in Christ, we were not only guilty and condemned, we were spiritually dead. We had no true life in us. We could not relate to God or interact with Him. For us to start out with God in justification, the Lord had to raise us with Christ from our spiritual deadness.

O Glorious Lord, what a good reminder this is of the desperate condition I was in when You justified me. I was not merely needy; I was spiritually dead. I thank You for burying that old life with Jesus in His tomb. I praise You for raising me with Christ to a new life. I rejoice in the radical nature of Your saving grace. Lord, by the power of the resurrection, lead me in the reality of newness of life, in Jesus' name, Amen.