



## ST. MICHAEL'S SERMONS

Greenville, SC

The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost – June 22, 2008  
Jeremiah 20:7-13; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24 – 39

---

### "OUR CHRIST—IAN LIFE"

" . . . So we too might walk in newness of life!" "Do you not know that all of us who have been Baptized into Christ Jesus were Baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him by Baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father so we too might walk in newness of life!"

Baptized **INTO** Christ Jesus – like putting your hand into a glove – like putting your head into a fireman's helmet – like putting your self into a uniform – so that now you become what you have been declared to be! And now walk around **in**, live your life **in**, speak your words **in** and do your deeds **in** new and different ways! In Christ's ways! In Christ – ian ways! Christian ways! As Christ to others! I put the hyphen in the title, so that we might begin to pronounce it differently, so that we might begin to understand it more clearly. "A disciple is not above the teacher." says Jesus. "It is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher." Our CHRIST—ian life.

Paul in Romans 6 proclaims the substantive difference Baptism makes in the Christian community, defining us and determining us. While the Gospel text describes the daily difficulties of living a life lost in Christ – a cross-formed life, and while Jeremiah lifts up the poignant paradox of being both enticed and enlivened by this God of grace and glory, it is Paul's proclamation of Baptismal grace which shows us how such newness of life can ever be possible . . . .

We learned it last Sunday: place your hand atop your head to remember that the waters of Baptism washed over the top of your head, and say "I am Baptized; I am chosen; I am a child of God; I belong to Jesus Christ!" Make the sign of the cross, and enter into the day with faith and courage. We were Baptized into His death – so we too might walk in newness of life! Our Christian life, our Christ—ian life, is **corporate**, is **participatory**, and is **transformational**.

Our Christ—ian life is **CORPORATE!** Not in the sense of Michelin or BMW, but in the sense of bodily – the Body of Christ present in the body of Christians gathered all together in such a way that the whole is in fact greater than the sum of the parts. "Church" is not a place we go. "Church" is not a club we join. Church is a thing we do, a life we live, a way we walk, a Lord we follow, a losing and a finding in which there is newness of life! It is first and last our Christ—ian life; plural, not singular, because we cannot do it alone. We cannot do it without each other, and we cannot do it without Christ our Teacher.

Our Christ—ian life is Corporate. And it is **PARTICIPATORY!** It gets us up and moving to proclaim this newness of life in particular and personal ways, to embody the Body of Christ with our own flesh and blood, lips and lives, hearts and hands, to lose our life in the life of the community so that we may find this newness of life. Because we have learned that we are better off with the Church than we are without the Church – and, just as we need the Church the other 167 hours a week when we are not gathered in this place so Christ needs us to be the Church the other 167 hours a week when we are not gathered in this place. “Church” is not a place we go. “Church” is not a club we join which provides services to its members only. Church is a thing we do, a life we live, a way we walk, a Lord we follow, a losing and a finding in which there is newness of life.

Our Christ—ian life is Corporate. It is Participatory. And it is **TRANSFORMATIONAL!** It changes us! And it changes the world around us! It is the living organism of God’s new creation, and it is the corporate participatory instrument of Gods creating God’s new creation to heal the entire universe. It is transformational, just as the Supper we share is transformational – the hungry are fed, the proud are humbled, no one goes away hungry, and everyone with eyes to see can glimpse the Kingdom of God! It changes us. And it changes the world around us. “Church” is not a place we go. “Church” is not a club we join. Church is a thing we do, a life we live, a way we walk, a Lord we follow, a losing and a finding in which there is newness of life. It is the community of those disciples following Jesus and doing ministry “Serving Christ in the World!” It is corporate. It is participatory. And it is transformational.

Look again at the cover of this morning’s worship folder. We have a lot of fun picking cover art each week! Because there is a lot of bad cover art. And much of it has bad theology behind it. But when we get it right, we know it; and this week’s cover gets it right! It portrays my vision and my prayer for our congregation – that we truly become a place which enthusiastically and energetically engenders a people who walk in newness of life . . . .

Thank God for your partnership in this ministry!

AMEN