

Connecting To Christ (Romans 6:1-11)
For Your Life in Christ the Week of The Baptism of Our Lord
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA (LC-MS)

Rev. Dr. Alfonso O. Espinosa

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Introduction: Walking Through The Airport At LAX Last Week...

- A. An earnest neo-evangelical made a b-line for the Pastor wearing a collar!**
- B. Got a track on being "Born Again!"**
- C. On the way out on a different level, another guy from the same church made a b-line for me again! I was marked!**
- D. But this time I didn't take the track, because I had already read it and had the six points memorized, so I put my hand up, smiled, and said, "Wait, let me see if I have these six-points right!" I had fun with it and kept saying, "Now...don't tell me...!" I recited each of those points:**

Part I: The Six Points from this very dedicated Non-Denominational Church...here they are:

- A. Avoid Sinning (in the sense of habitual sin)**
- B. Seek Righteousness (in terms of deeds of righteousness)**
- C. Be Pure (keep oneself from being defiled, so if you know something is a sinful influence, get away from it)**
- D. Trust in the Lord (have a true commitment to Christ)**
- E. Love the brethren (that is, love esp. fellow Christians)**
- F. Resist the world (very similar to "C" above)**

Part II: Now here's the thing: sometimes Lutherans over-react to these points. In truth, one can make a biblical case for every

one of the points. In and of themselves, they are good points.

- A. For example, while it is true that we have a sinful nature and sin in weakness, the Christian is to strive to avoid willful sinning. Sometimes those who profess Jesus are just ignorant of this Biblical teaching or they just ignore it. Notice how King David prayed:**

Psalm 19:13: *"Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression."* (NIV)

- B. What about the idea of keeping oneself pure? Well consider what the Lord says about true religion:**

James 1:27: *"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."*

- C. So again I have to say our neo-evangelical brethren are sharing some important biblical teachings.**

Part III: So Then I Left The Airport Actually Praising God for His Good Reminders To Me of These Things and with A New Resolve to Live in His Sanctification for Me!

- A. And just when I was feeling pretty good about everything...the rest of the story.**
- B. Just a few hours later, I received some disturbing news and when I got that news, my flesh took over! Instead of having pure thoughts, I struggled to have the right thoughts. I was upset, I was irritated, I was resentful...I was (once again reminded that I am)...a sinner!**
- C. And so all of that good resolve from these very good reminders seemed to fly out the window!**
- D. Until I remembered something...and actually I had thought of this even back at the airport: You know the saying, "Context is everything," or perhaps if you're in real estate, "Location is everything," well the words in Scripture are located in a context, so location really is everything!**

Part IV and Conclusion: There is a context to our sanctification and Romans 6 locates it:

- A. We can do none of the six points on our own, none of them.**
- B. It is only in Christ that any of them occur.**
- C. But we need to grasp that the Lord is not engaging in mental imaging or positive thinking or attitude adjustment...these are not metaphors, but actual and tangible facts:**
- D. In baptism a joining takes place.**
 - 1. When Jesus was baptized, He was joined to us.**
 - 2. When you were baptized, you were joined to Him.**
- E. Through hocuspocus? Or institutionalized religion? No, but through the power of the Word.**
- F. This word "Word" is vitally important: It is the word for Jesus Himself so that He comes when the Word is applied.**
- G. The Word – Jesus Himself – comes in baptism.**
- H. That is why we are not talking about an alternative power or life, but the same, one-and-only power and life: Jesus Christ.**

- I. In this act by Christ...this is Jesus' work...we are:**
 - 1. Buried with Christ**
 - 2. Raised with Christ**
- J. But why does God do this? He loves making contact with you, so...**
 - 1. He created you from dust**
 - 2. He breathed into the dust for a living person with a living spirit**
 - 3. He feeds you and clothes you...He is always touching you**
 - 4. His modus operandi does not change for our spiritual needs...He touches you with His Word and Sacraments...and remember that every true Sacrament is instituted by Jesus and conducted by Jesus. He touches you over and over again!**
- K. And with His constant touch, with His life, His grace, His presence, then the rest is achieved: He joins us to Himself so that our old self is crucified (verse 6) over and over again.**
- L. Don't worry about the repetition...it's not a bad thing...it is actually a sign that God is working in you each and every day!**