

Providence Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School
December 7, 2008

***Foundations of the Faith: Knowing for Living
Union with Christ***

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. – Ephesians 1:3-14

Review and Introduction

After considering the person and work of Jesus Christ and what he has accomplished for us by his life, death and resurrection we should consider further how a person comes to enjoy the benefits of his work and just how deep and wide those benefits and that enjoyment actually are. We can see this in many ways as we consider Christ's union with us.

Christ in you/you in Christ

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who love me and gave himself for me. – Galatians 2:20

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. – John 15:5

Further foundations for this truth throughout Scripture

- The picture of marriage

- The concept of representation

- The head and the body

- As seen in the Godhead

What this union with Christ is like

- A representative or covenantal union
- A real bodily union
- A union brought about by faith
- A union created by the Holy Spirit
- A union that is very extensive
- A union in all of life

What this union with Christ brings about: transformation

*By this union believers are changed into the image of Christ according to his human nature. What Christ effects in his people is in a sense a replica or reproduction of what took place with him. Not only objectively, but in a subjective sense also they bear the cross, are crucified, die, and are raised to newness of life with Christ. They share in a measure in the experiences of their Lord, Matt. 16:24; Rom. 6:5; Gal 2:20; Col. 1:23; 2:12; 3:1; 1 Pet. 4:13. – Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, quoted in Sinclair Ferguson, *Know Your Christian Life*.*

- It brings about transformation in view of the cost following Christ.

*The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death – we give our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, quoted in Sinclair Ferguson, *Know Your Christian Life*, p. 99.*

- It brings about transformation as seen in the fruit that is produced

- This gives great dignity to the believer
You have been bought with a price...

-This provides greater confidence in prayer
...ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you.

-This warns and protects us in times of temptation
Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit...

-This brings about true triumph in life and death
If then you have been raised up with Christ...