

Week 3: In Christ

Last week we looked at how we can start to close the gap between who we are and who God is calling us to be, and the trick for this one isn't to pull back who Christ has called us to be, but rather to push ourselves forward with some grace driven effort toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. As we said last week, ambition to be more Godly is Godly ambition. This week we will look at how we can effectively start to close the gap between who are and who others think we are.



1. The Real You (For A Christian) Is You In Union With Christ

- Read Philippians 3:7-9; Romans 6:1-5; Colossians 3:1-4

Paul wants to be united to Christ. This is actually how he always speaks about salvation. A deep mystical union with Christ. Some scholars count that Paul uses this phrase in terms of our salvation 83 times in his canonical writings. He says it 27 times in Ephesians alone.

- Read John 14:20
 - Without Christ we live IN sin. That is important to know. You can be really good but sin still defines you.
 - But as Christians we are somehow united to the sacrificial work of Jesus. The death he died is beneficial to me because I died too to the identity of sin. The resurrection he won is beneficial to me, because I have been raised too to a new life of righteousness in him.
 - As we were baptized into His righteousness, He was baptized into our sinfulness.
- ❖ Q: Take a moment to consider your union with Christ. How does this influence your understanding and perception of God?
- ❖ Q: How does this understanding of union with Christ change the way you view and understand baptism, even your own baptism?
- ❖ Q: Have you been baptized? If not, does the understanding of union with Christ help you understand the weight and glory of this symbolic act?

"Nothing is more central or basic than union and communion with Christ... Union with Christ is really the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ." - John Murray

2. If I Am United To Christ And Christ Is United To Me, Then I Can Close The Delta Between Who I Am And Who Others Think I Am Because:

- I Am Loved, So I Don't Need To Pretend To Be Someone I am Not To Feel Loved (Read John 17:26)
 - The problem with human love is that it is often attached an illusion because we pretend to be something we aren't and then people love that and so then we desperately need to defend that.
- I Am Free From Condemnation, So I Don't Need To Create A Better Version Of Myself To Feel Good Enough (Read Romans 8:1 in light of Romans 6 and 7)
 - We get the great end of the union deal. We get righteousness and life and Christ gets sin and death.
- I Don't Need To Feel Inferior Or Superior To Anyone In The Church Because They Too Are Hidden In Christ
 - No Christian is more valuable than another. No Christian is more loved than another. No Christian is more righteous ultimately than another.
- ❖ Q: In what ways do you find yourself sometimes pretending so that people may think more highly of you? What is the problem with this?
- ❖ Q: We all create an image of ourselves that we put out there for people to see. How does knowing that you are fully united to Christ and found in Him help you release the grip you have to that image?
- ❖ Q: How does union with Christ free you up from feelings of condemnation?
- ❖ Q: In what ways do you find yourself elevating yourself above others? What leads you to these feelings of superiority?

Closing the gap between who we are, who we pretend to be, and who God designed us to be



- ❖ What is it about union with Christ, your union and the union of others, that may compel you to love others better and see that there is no superiority or inferiority among those who have put their hope in Jesus?
- ❖ Q: How does union with Christ compel you to love others more? Think of a time when you have not done this well. What could you do differently?

3. If I Am United To Christ And Christ Is United To Me, Then I Can Close The Delta Between Who I Am And Who God Has Called Me To Be Because:

- My Sanctification Was Committed To Before The Foundations Of The World (Read Ephesians 1:3-4; Philippians 2:12-13)
 - We can so often feel like we have no chance for progress because it can feel like God is working against us in some ways. The opposite is true. He is committed to finishing the work that he started in us.
- My Sanctification Is Empowered By The Holy Spirit (Read Romans 8:10-11)
 - Ephesians 1 tells us that in Christ we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is a promise and a guarantee. Romans 8 tells us the effect of this Spirit!
- My Eternal Reward Is Secured Because Of The Work Of Jesus In My Place
 - *"Because we are united to him, we are recipients of all the indescribable blessings that belong to Christ. As the God-man, he is welcomed to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, who rejoices over him. But here's the amazing news: we are, too! He is completely loved, approved of, accepted, and delighted in, and so are we."* Elyse Fitzpatrick
- ❖ Q: Think of a specific area of your life where you know that you are struggling to move toward who God has called you to be. Why do you feel this is so hard to break free from?
- ❖ Q: Think of something in the past that you used to struggle with but now are free of. How was the Holy Spirit working in this to bring you life as Romans 8 would say it? (This could have been in some type of circumstance, or attitude change, or revelation in your heart).
- ❖ Q: Grace driven effort! What things could you put in place to push you toward greater sanctification in light of your union with Christ personally, and in community with others?
- ❖ Q: Consider the quote above from Elyse Fitzpatrick. When you are in Christ this is true of you. Have you accepted and rightly understood your union to Jesus Christ and the amazing implications of this truth.

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