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# The Proclamation of our Union with Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17

*A review of the series as a sermon preaching our union with Christ.*

A survey and review of the blessings and privileges that union with Christ brings us. Life, union with believers, union in the gathered assembly, joint-heirs with Christ

## Election - Its Eternal Plan

### The Design of our Salvation in Christ - Ephesians 1:3-14

#### We were chosen in Christ (v.3-6)

*<sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

#### We have been redeemed in Christ (v.7-10)

*<sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

#### We have an inheritance in Christ (v.11-12)

*<sup>11</sup> 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, <sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.*

#### We are sealed in Christ (v.13-14)

*<sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

## The Delivery of our Salvation in Christ- 2 Timothy 1:8-10

*<sup>8</sup> Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, <sup>9</sup> for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! <sup>10</sup> Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

As a result of the salvation being delivered to us through the gospel and gospel bearers like Paul, we find Paul's "in Christ" language all through his writing. He is connected to "in Christ" people. Paul is serving with his "in Christ" ministry, All of this driven by Paul's "in Christ" glory.

### Thinking it through...

The Bible is radically Christ-centered. The New Testament explains and expounds on that. The church is to be radically Christ-centered. Yet we often are not. Our doctrine becomes academic and divorced from reality and relationships.

Not all good and necessary truth for us is "practical". Many things that the Bible says are true of us do not have commands for us. That we are in Christ has no command to you. I cannot command you to be "in Christ". However, as we will see, being in Christ will have huge ramifications for how we live.

God has planned for our union with Christ from before the foundation of the world.

All the blessings that God has planned for us come to Jesus first, and then to us. How? Because we are placed in Him and therefore blessed with Him.

Our salvation is in Christ. There is no other name nor any other one nor any other sphere where our salvation is delivered. The elect receive their salvation through faith when the Spirit sanctifies, regenerates and seals us.

We are charged to take the gospel into the world as a means whereby God delivers His saving grace to those He has chosen. We can be messengers. We ought to be carrying the message. And the gospel is not bound but runs to the places and persons God sends it to.

Those who hear the gospel and believe the gospel are "in Christ"

## Sin – Its Necessitating Problem

### The Progression from Sin to Death (Romans 5:12-14)

*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.*

Sin entered the world through Adam (v. 12a). As a result, there came death through his sin (v. 12b). However, we find that there was death to all (v. 13-14a) with the result, all are viewed as having sinned. This is because, Adam is a type of One to come (v. 14b).

## **The Progression From Death to Life (Ephesians 2:1-10)**

Sin led to death for all; but grace brings life to many.

### **In sin, we are the walking dead (v.1-3)**

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*

### **But God's great love moved to bring us life (v. 4-6).**

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—*

### **We have been saved through His rich grace (v. 8-9).**

*by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

### **This was all to accomplish our created purpose (v.10).**

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

## **The Progression of Life Without Christ (Ephesians 4:17-19)**

*Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

There is to be a clear contrast (v.17a) in our lifestyle. That is because we were (and unbelievers are) empty in their thinking (v. 17b), alienated from God (v.18) and greedy for sin and impurity (v.19).

### **Thinking it through**

Union with Christ is necessary because Adam's sin and the resulting death separated us from God.

Our union with Christ is necessary, because we were dead in our sin and separated from the life of God, destined for God's wrath. We had no ability or intention of ever turning to God.

Our union with Christ is a gift from God through faith. There was nothing we did or could do to merit any part of our salvation. God showed us the riches of his grace by saving us and unifying us to Christ.

Because of our unity with Christ we should no longer live as we did before we were saved. We are no longer separated from the life of God, and because of his grace we can live a godly life.

Children of God do not have weaknesses (plural). We are completely weak as creatures, even though we are made strong through our dependence on Christ through personal suffering.

If you repent of your sins and turn to Christ, you will be unified with Christ.

Union with Christ is a necessity for true life, even in the midst of suffering and weakness in this life, but some day even that, along with death will be wiped away forever.

## **Anticipation - Its Old Testament Prospects**

There are two ideas found in the Old Testament scriptures that anticipate fulfillment in Jesus. These are "the importance of identity with" and "the relational dependence upon God himself." The Old Testament has many figures that foreshadow the union with Christ theme but we will focus on these two this morning. Our purpose, as human beings, was never to live autonomously, but in "identity" with our creator and our "independence" was always to be "dependent" with our existence found in our relationship with God himself.

### **In our Image, After our Likeness (Genesis 1:26-28; 5:1-3)**

The idea of "image" in the Old Testament prepares us for something greater in the New Testament.

#### **Created in the Image of God (1:26-28)**

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

We were originally made in the image of God. This was His perfect design.

#### **Born in the Image of Adam (5:1-3)**

This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

God's creative activity "in his likeness" now extended to Seth as the "in his own likeness and after his image" of Adam. Now this image has been adulterated. But the concept remains.

## **Born in the Image of God (Colossians 1:13-17; Philippians 2:5-11)**

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

The “in his image” motif that began in Genesis 1 can only be restored because the true image has come and our destiny, our “righteousness leading to eternal life,” depends upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

That is what Colossians 1 and Philippians 2 are asserting about Jesus. It is not merely that Jesus is divine but that he, as a man, is the true image of God that is able to restore the original creation order and mandate.

## **Restored in the Image of God (Colossians 3:9-11)**

<sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

In Christ, we have become a new person, a new self. This new person we are becoming is being remade, restored in the image of God.

## **“Will God Dwell with Man?” (2 Chronicles 6:12-21, 7:1-3)**

### **The Old Testament Picture**

Now therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David. “But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O Lord my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you...

As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord’s house.

God’s presence does arrive. Now, Solomon could have been affirming that God is too “big” for a human temple or even the earth for that matter and expected just a “show” of God’s glory. God is with us. His filling the temple is not just a show; he is in a real sense coming to be present in the temple. Notice that he is described as good and having saving mercy and grace

But our purpose is not to serve in or around a tent/temple that is but a shadow or a picture of ultimate reality. The only way we can accomplish this is because of our connection to the true priest and temple that brings God to us.

## **The New Covenant Reality (1 Peter 2:4-10)**

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Our ability to accomplish our purpose of worship and service only occurs if we are in relationship to the true temple and its priest. It is only as we are "His people" that allows this function.

### **Thinking it through...**

We need to remind ourselves frequently that who we are in this life is not about what we accomplish but who we are. The intention of man's existence was not to be about being their best selves in and of themselves. Adam and Eve were not "self-made men (or women)". They were God-made individuals intended to be His image. That image can now be restored through the work of Jesus. It is only "in Him" that our true, intended purpose can be found.

And we need to affirm that this image is only truly established in a relationship with God himself. We cannot live this image outside of a viable, flourishing dynamic with God. And that comes only through life that flows from the Gospel.

We must recognize our inability, failure and sin. We must trust in the work of Jesus Christ; his perfect life, death and resurrection to substitute for our failure and pay for our sins. This must be real, not just at some time in the past of our lives but daily, hourly, moment-by-moment. If this is not true of you, don't leave today without speaking to someone about the Gospel. To be "out of Christ" is to be lost, both now and for eternity.

## **Regeneration – Its Saving Provision**

God has provided for our need by giving us the new birth, in Christ.

### **The Doctrine of the New Birth (1 Peter 1:3; 22-23)**

#### **The Origin of our New Birth (v.3)**

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

## **The Means of our New Birth (v.22-23)**

<sup>22</sup> Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, <sup>23</sup> since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

Being born again means we have a responsibility that is entailed (v.22). Why? Because we have been born again by the Word and Spirit (v.23).

## **The Details of our Regeneration (Titus 3:3-7)**

<sup>3</sup> For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. [ESV]

Our sinful condition (v.3) makes regeneration necessary. But God's saving grace (v.4-5) sends His transforming Spirit (v. 5-6) into our souls. God's Spirit regenerates us and God's Spirit renews us. Through regeneration, God's multifaceted purposes are being worked out in Christ. (v.7)

## **The Discussion around the New Birth (John 3:1-15)**

John records for us an important interaction around the subject of regeneration.

### **The Person Presented (v.1-2)**

Here is a religious man (v.1). Here are his religious words (v.2).

### **The Provision Described (v.3-13)**

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.<sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

### **The Necessity of the New Birth (v.3-5)**

Without the new birth, one cannot see the Kingdom of God (v.3-4). Without the new birth, one cannot enter the Kingdom (v.5).

## **The Character of the New Birth (v.6-8)**

In the new birth, God is active, man is passive (v.3,5). It is produced by spiritual means (v.6). It is basic to the New Covenant (v.7) and is solely under God's control (v.8).

## **The Problem Exposed (v.9-15)**

<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

So, now we understand why he is not believing (v. 9-13). We also are challenged with what he and we must believe (v.14-15).

### **Thinking it through**

Respond to the call to believe and bow. Be saved today.

Believe what the Bible is teaching us:

We are dead in our sin. Only the infusion of spiritual life can solve this problem.

We are alive in Christ because God has given us the new birth through the Word of God.

Our union with Christ through the new birth is totally an act of God's power flowing through His love for us and mercy to us.

Our new birth means that we have the life of God through the Spirit in our souls.

Live with your union with Christ in mind:

The new birth radically transforms us. We are now a part of the New Creation in Christ.

The new birth makes us clean from our old sin and sins so that, while we still live in this old world and old body, our hearts are new.

Our union with Christ places on us the responsibility to obey the truth aiming at a sincere and earnest love for one another.

Our regeneration, our new birth by Word and Spirit unites us to God and brings life which is the essence of the union.

## **Baptism - Its Visible Picture**

God has given us an ordinance that clearly pictures our union in Christ and with the church.



## **We Share in Christ's Death and Resurrection (Romans 6:1-14)**

*<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

*<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin*

*<sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

Through Baptism a Biblical way of speaking is instructed and illustrated. Through immersion, baptism then gives us an ordained picture. This going down into water pictures our being in Christ and therefore going down into His death. Coming up out of the water pictures our union with Jesus' resurrection. Therefore we are reminded of its spiritual reality. Since the spiritual reality is true, there are entailed responsibilities for us. We must rightly respond to these truths.

## **We Receive a Spiritual Circumcision (Colossians 2:8-15)**

<sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup> and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. <sup>11</sup> In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

### **Our Sharp Warning (v.6-8)**

To walk by faith(v. 6-7)

To be on the guard(v. 8)

### **The Instruction in Christ's Centrality(v.9-15)**

#### **Our Fullness in Christ(v.9-10)**

All of God is in Christ bodily

All believers are indwelt by God in Christ

## **Our Circumcision in Christ(v.11-12)**

Its Spiritual Effect(v.11)

Its Spiritual Cause(v.12)

## **Our Resurrection in Christ(v.13-15)**

Granted us new life raising us out of spiritual deadness.

Forgiven of our trespasses freeing us from guilt.

Canceled the debt incurred by the legal demands of the Law.

Disarmed spiritual enemies empowering victory over them.

### **Thinking it through**

Why are going over this *again*.

Our being in Christ is one of the most important truths for the Christian. It is fundamental to understanding how Jesus' death and resurrection is applied to us for both our salvation and our transformation.

Here is some of what we must believe in an obeying way. Because we are in Christ:

We share in Christ's death and resurrection so that we do not live like the old people we used to be and live like the new people we are becoming.

We receive a spiritual circumcision that frees us from being controlled by the old person we used to be.

We are the true descendants of Abraham so that we do not live by the Law.

These great truths require us to respond by living by faith. We are to believe God's truths, God's New Covenant promises and God's New Covenant commands in an obeying way.

## **Communion – Its Community Celebration (1 Corinthians 11:17-35)**

We have an ordinance to share to remind us of what the gospel tells us in Christ.

### **Strong Words of Correction (v.17-22)**

<sup>17</sup> But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. <sup>18</sup> For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, <sup>19</sup> for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. <sup>20</sup> When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. <sup>21</sup> For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup> What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

Paul challenges the assembling of the people as he exposes the Attitude of the people. He condemns the actions of the people at the Communion Table.

### **Reminding Words of Instruction (v.23-26)**

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

There was a betrayal. There was a broken body. There is life in the New Covenant. There is a proclamation of the gospel that is made.

### **Clear Words of Explanation (v.27-35)**

<sup>27</sup> Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

<sup>33</sup> So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— <sup>34</sup> if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

Partake of the Lord's Table only if you are assured of being in Christ. Partake fully recognizing and accepting all as equally in Christ. Partake, knowing the possible consequences of taking it wrongly. Partake in a way that reflects what has been taught

### **Thinking it through....**

As God's people, there is a responsibility to come to the Table. Communion is regularly offered here in many different gatherings and settings. You should be here.

The Lord's Table is a community celebration. We take it as God's people.

Jesus and the gospel are the center, the heart, of the Lord's Table. Remember... Jesus.

## **Faith – Its Justifying Principle**

In Christ, we have been justified, we have a right standing with God through faith.

### **The Righteousness through our being in Christ (Romans 5:12-21)**

#### **Because of our Ruin (v.12-14)**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— <sup>13</sup> for sin indeed was in the world

before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

### **Through our Redeemer (v.15-17)**

<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. <sup>16</sup> And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. <sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

### **For our Righteousness (v.18-21)**

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **The Freedom through our Union with Christ (Galatians)**

### **Churches are in Christ (Galatians 1:21-24)**

<sup>21</sup> Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. <sup>22</sup> And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. <sup>23</sup> They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." <sup>24</sup> And they glorified God because of me.

### **In Christ brings Gospel Freedom (Galatians 2:4-5)**

<sup>4</sup> Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— <sup>5</sup> to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

### **Justified by Faith in Christ (Galatians 2:14-17)**

<sup>14</sup> But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

<sup>15</sup> We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

<sup>17</sup> But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

## **The Blessing of Abraham comes in Christ (Galatians 3:7-14)**

<sup>7</sup> Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” <sup>9</sup> So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

<sup>10</sup> For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” <sup>11</sup> Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” <sup>12</sup> But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— <sup>14</sup> so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

## **No Natural Divisions in Christ (Galatians 3:28)**

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

## **All that Matters, in Christ (Galatians 5:6)**

<sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

### **Thinking it through....**

In Christ you have His righteousness imputed to you as justification and imparted within you as regeneration.

In Christ, you must not go back to the Law. As a Gentile you were never under it and now you are certainly not under it.

In Christ, you are a recipient of the promises to Abraham. The Holy Spirit who made you alive and dwells within is that blessing.

In Christ, we are made a part of the New Covenant. The New Covenant then connects us spiritually to Abraham and to faith.

There is no way to be “in Christ” by Law, by works, by being good, by religion, by ethnicity, by gender. The way to be saved is by faith.

There is no way to live “in Christ” by Law. The way to live as a Christian, all that matters, is to live out who you are. All that matters is, “faith working by love.”

## **People – Its Ministry Connections**

Being in Christ means, like Paul, that we are serving and ministering through relationships.

### **There are those who are partners in Christ (v.9)**

Some were traveling with Paul. All were serving in or through churches. Many were traveling on their own, like Apollos. This servant of Christ has his entire ministry (Acts 18:24–28) and is instructed and helped by others. Paul acknowledges his significance in ministry (1 Corinthians 3:1–9) while affirming Apollos' independence in ministry (1 Corinthians 16:12).

### **There are those who are beloved in Christ (v.9)**

Paul speaks of one who is beloved as a son in the faith. Others are beloved as partners in the work. Some are spoken of as special to Paul but unknown to us. Many are spoken of as special by name.

### **There are those who are tested and approved in Christ (v.10).**

In Christ, people are tested and approved for service and for leadership. Some are commended for service and leadership through forgiveness and restoration.

### **Thinking it through...**

From eternity past God has chosen who He will place in Christ through salvation.

Because of sin and judgment, we were spiritually dead and separated from God.

But God brought us to life and joined us to Him by the Spirit's work.

God saves us in Christ through faith by grace so that we have a right standing with Him.

He has given us two ordinances to remind us of being in Christ and being saved by Christ.

In Christ we serve with people in loving and lasting relationships.

The proclamation, the preaching of this great truth, transforms us.