

The Ephesians Series

In Christ

Ephesians 1:3

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*Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas*

I invite you to turn again to Ephesians 1 as we continue our study of this great letter. This morning, we are not going to get very far. We are, in fact, going to cover a couple of words. Someone told me that they had estimated, based on our current speed, it was going to take us six years to make it through Ephesians. Let me assure you, that is not true. This first sentence is packed with profound and rich truth, and we are going to take our time working our way through this, but we will not go word by word quite so slowly through the rest of the letter.

This morning we come to the little phrase “in Christ”. You know, there are some similarities between our faith (the Christian faith, the faith in the true God who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and Satan’s counterfeit imitations of religion. When you compare them, you see that there are books that have been revealed. There are writings that are to be followed. There is some approach to salvation. With the true Christian faith, righteousness that comes by faith alone; with all others, righteousness that comes through some sort of human effort. Nevertheless, there are these similarities. There are threads that lead some people to conclude that all religions are essentially the same, and all a way to God.

That is, of course, not true, and there are elements of our faith that are utterly distinct. Such is the expression that Paul introduces at the end of Ephesians 1:3. It’s the little phrase “in Christ”. This concept is unique to Christianity. You don’t hear Buddhists refer to being “in Buddha”. You don’t hear followers of Confucius saying that they are “in Confucius”. You don’t hear Muslims talking about being “in Allah”.

But Jesus taught us, and the apostle Paul, His representative taught us, that we, as believers in Jesus Christ, are in Christ. It’s impossible to overestimate the importance of what we are going to talk about this morning. In fact, one writer called it the heart of Paul’s religion. John Murray, in his excellent book *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* says that union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation. John Calvin, throughout his writing, stresses that

it is impossible for us, as sinners, to share in the saving benefits of Christ's work unless we are united to Jesus Christ, unless we are in Christ.

W. Pink writes "the subject of spiritual union is the most important, the most profound, and yet the most blessed of any that is set forth in the sacred Scriptures. And yet, sad to say, there is hardly any which is now more generally neglected." That's absolutely true, isn't it? Think about the last time you heard a message on what it means to be in Christ or to be united to Jesus Christ. Pink goes on to say "the very expression is unknown in most professing Christian circles, and even where it is employed, it is given such a protracted meaning as to take in only a fragment of its precious truth."

James Montgomery Boyce, before his death, wrote, "union with Christ is the foundation from which all other personalized spiritual blessings flow". These writers are effusive in their discussion of this doctrine. They are compelling of its importance, because Scripture itself gives it that level of importance. It was more than 100 years ago that a scholar by the name of Deisman discovered that Paul uses the phrase "in Christ" or similar expressions such as "in Him" or "in whom" some 164 times in his letters alone, thirty-six times here in the letter to the Ephesian church and the surrounding churches, and eleven times just in the first main sentence that begins in verse 3 and runs down through verse 14. This is absolutely crucial. The writer was right. This is the heart of Paul's religion, of his faith.

We ended with this little expression last time. Turn again to Ephesians 1:3. Look at that verse again, we looked at in detail last week "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ". That little, crucial phrase at the end of the verse introduces us to what theologians call the doctrine of our union with Christ. This morning I want us to briefly consider several aspects of our union with Christ. I want us to come to understand this truth. I ask you to stay with me. This can be difficult to understand, but I trust, by the end, you'll have your arms around what this really means. Several aspects of our union with Christ.

We'll look first of all at the meaning of the phrase.

Secondly, we'll look at the nature of the union.

And thirdly, the application of the doctrine.

Look first at the meaning of the phrase. What exactly does it mean when the writer says we are in Christ? And before we seek to define what it means, let's first make sure that we understand what it doesn't mean, because there has been much faulty teaching on this issue, and I want to sort of de-clutter your minds of that faulty teaching before we lay the framework for what scripture really teaches on this issue.

This is what it doesn't mean. First of all, it does not refer to the natural non-saving union of all life to the life of God. Do you understand that everything that lives, lives in God, or it would not live? It would cease to exist. That's what Paul told the Athenians, you remember, on Mars Hill in Acts 17:27 and 28. He says, God is not far from each one of us. In fact, in Him, we live and move, and exist. You see, the reason life continues on this planet is because of its connection to the life of God. It would immediately cease to exist without that connection. But that is not what Paul is talking about when he refers to being "in Him" that is, "in Christ". That's a different subject altogether. It's a redemptive subject, and not one related to the creation and the created order.

Secondly, union with Christ does not mean that the believer comes to possess all of the attributes of Christ including the divine attributes. False teachers often go astray here as they study this concept. You can turn on the television occasionally and hear a television preacher (often a charismatic preacher), refer to the fact that being connected to the life of God means that you are God. Probably the most famous example was Kenneth Copeland's statement, "you don't have a God in you, you are one". That is not what being in Christ, or being connected to Christ, is teaching.

Thirdly, being in Christ is not being connected to the church. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that union with Christ (their doctrine says that union with Christ) comes from your connection to the church, and that life is transmitted through the church, through the sacraments,

to the individual. That's not at all what this teaches. Instead, the Bible teaches that you are the church, and that you are connected directly and intimately to Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, being in Christ is not a mystical experience. This is where most of us, I think, tend to go astray. We've heard some teaching; we've read something along the way. We tend to think of being in Christ and union with Christ as something mystical. It's an experience in which you stop living, as it were, and Christ sort of lives literally through you. This idea permeates what's called the Cheswick Movement. Some of you are familiar with that. Or it's also referred to as the Deeper Life Movement, or the Victorious Life Movement. It's major voice (and if you have any books by this man on your shelves, just beware) it's major voice is still the writings of a man named Watchman Nee. Watchman Nee, I'm confident, was a brother in Christ, but he was misguided and misled and out of step with the historic Christian faith when it came to the doctrine of sanctification. Those who teach this mystical view (and I was exposed to it early on in my own Christian life, shortly after I came to faith in Christ, reading some of this stuff) those who teach this mystical view of union with Christ say something like this. They say, what really needs to happen is, you need to stop trying to live your Christian life. The problem is you're trying to live it. You need to "let go and let God". You need to let Christ live His life in yours. Just sort of take a background and let Christ, by faith, live through you. That's not what in Christ means.

So, if being in Christ doesn't mean any of those things, what does it mean? Well, let's go back to the fountainhead, back to our Lord Himself, who first introduced this truth. Go back to John 6. Here in the gospel of John, on several occasions, the apostle John tells us that our Lord taught, in bare form, this great truth. John 6 and look at verse 56. Jesus says, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I [abide] in him." Now, this passage is often taken out of context. It's made to say things about the Lord's supper, which it isn't talking about at all. Our Lord interprets it for us. Notice verse 63. He says "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I have spoken to you are spirit[ual words and are about spiritual life]". I'm not talking about transubstantiation or some mystical way that the communion is turned into the real body and blood of Christ. He's talking about spiritual realities. You and I have to come to taste of Christ in order to enjoy the reality of being in Him. being in Him.

You see it again in 14:20. Our Lord refers to this doctrine again. “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you [are] in Me, and I in you.” Again, emphasizing the reality of, there’s this union that’s going to take place, that already has taken place, but they’re going to understand more deeply. In John 15 He likens it to a vine and its branches. Look at verse 5 of John 15. “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” And the final reference in John’s gospel is in John 17 in our Lord’s high priestly prayer the night before His crucifixion. John 17:21. This is His prayer. He says Father, [I want them] “... all [to] be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” That same concept of being in or abiding in is here used in reference to God, and our being in God.

Now, that gives us just a seed idea, but there really isn’t much there to help us understand the concept. To help us further define what being in Christ means, I want us to briefly consider several questions.

What does the phrase mean? Well, how do theologians define this union with Christ? Let me give you Berkhof, Louis Berkhof’s definition. “It is that intimate, vital, and spiritual union between Christ and His people, in virtue of which He is the source of their life and strength, of their blessedness and salvation.” In other words, it is that connection to Christ through which everything flows to us. Every spiritual blessing.

How does this happen? How do we end up in Christ? Well, it happens because it was initiated by God. In 1 Corinthians 1:30, Paul tells us, “by [God’s] doing, you are in Christ.” By God’s doing, you are in Christ Jesus.

So, how did God do it? Well, it happened by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, if you grew up with or have had connection with charismatic or Pentecostal churches, you’ve heard them refer to the baptism of the spirit as the special gifting of a few believers. It’s something unique. It’s not something that everyone has. They usually connect it to speaking in tongues or to the miraculous gifts. But Scripture, on the other hand, says that every Christian has already

experienced the baptism of the Spirit. It happened at the moment that you came to faith in Jesus Christ. We're never told to seek it, but that it is already a reality.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 12. This is how we came to be in Christ. It was through the baptism of the spirit. First Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit, we were all" Stop there. Here's the emphasis. Paul says, this is true of all believers. There's no exclusions. If you're in Christ, this has happened. We were all baptized into one body. Notice past tense. This has already happened. For every believer this is already a reality. At the moment of your conversion you were [and there's no water in this verse, the word baptized here has the idea of immersion] you were immersed into Jesus Christ. At the moment you were saved, the Holy Spirit immersed you into Jesus Christ. You say, here it says into the body.

How do we know that's Christ's body? Well, look at Galatians 3. Galatians 3:27. Paul puts it like this in the parallel passage here. He says "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." So, if you are a Christian, you are in Christ. You are inseparably united to Jesus Christ. At the moment of your conversion, the Holy Spirit immersed you into Christ, and you are forever, and permanently, connected to, united to Him. That's the meaning of the phrase "in Christ".

But there's a second aspect of this doctrine that I want us to examine this morning. Not only the meaning of the phrase, which only gets us so far; but let's take the second step and look at the nature of the union. Okay, we're united to Christ, but what exactly does that union entail? What exactly is the nature of our union with Christ? Well, we can build an understanding of this union by looking in several different directions.

First of all, let's look in the direction of the Greek in this text. It can help us just a little. It's not a great help, but just a little help. If you were to look at the Greek preposition that's translated "in" here, most scholars agree that it's used in what's called the local sense. That is, to identify our location. We have been incorporated into Christ. Now, stay with me. This sounds strange, but let me put it to you this way. If you are a believer, Christ is the place where you exist. Christ is the place where you live. In the mind of God, you live in Christ. You are located in Christ.

Well, that's helpful, gets us a step closer to understanding. But (I don't know about you), but at this point, I still don't fully have my arms around what it means to be united with Christ. So, what I did this week, and I'm going to share the summary with you, is to survey the Scripture. And if you survey the Scripture on this truth, you would find that our union with Christ (the nature of our union with Christ) can be explained primarily by three adjectives. Three adjectives.

The first adjective is the adjective "representative", or "representational", representational. Now this is absolutely foundational to understanding how God looks at you, how God thinks about you. Stay with me. This is incredibly basic, but it is profound.

By an act of divine reckoning, God has permanently considered Christ to be your representative. Let me say that again. By an act of divine reckoning, God has permanently considered Christ to be your representative. This is one sense of what it means to be in Christ. He is your representative. Whatever Christ is, and whatever Christ does, accrues to your benefit.

Now, we don't really understand (or fully use) this whole idea of representative very much, but the closest we come in our culture is, we live in a representational form of government. You and I go to the ballot box, and we vote on representatives; those who will go to the state legislature, to the governor's office, to the White House, or to the congress and represent us. They're there in our place. We choose them, and then they go and represent us there. And we benefit, we reap the benefits of the good and wise decisions they make, and we suffer the consequences of the poor decisions they make. And we won't get into which of those it's tending to be more of these days. But regardless, that's representation. They are our representatives. That's how it is in the spiritual dimension.

Except, we didn't choose our representative in the spiritual dimension. God chose Christ for us in eternity past, and because Christ is perfect, we never have to deal with the negative consequences of His being our representative. We only reap the benefits of His representation. It began, this representation of Christ on our behalf, in eternity past. In fact, look at Ephesians 1:4. We'll study it, Lord willing, next week where we get to the doctrine of election. In Ephesians 1:4, Paul writes that God chose you in Christ in eternity past. In eternity, God elected

you because He saw you connected to Christ as your representative. Second Timothy 1:9. God has “saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,”

John Murray, commenting on these verses, says this “those who will be saved, were not even contemplated by the Father in the eternal counsel of His predestinating love, apart from union with Christ. They were chosen in Christ. As far back as we can go in tracing salvation to its fountain, we find union with Christ. It is not something tacked on. It is there from the outset.”

So, in eternity past, when God chose you for His own, it had to do with Christ being your representative. In God’s mind, you have been connected to Christ as your representative from eternity. And that only intensified when Christ became one of us and lived here on the earth. Through the earthly life of Christ, God (listen carefully now, think about this) as Christ lived here in the world, God considered Him to be your perfect representative. So whatever Christ did, God counted it as if we had done it. Take for example His death. That’s the one we’re most familiar with. Jesus died as our representative. You have verses like Isaiah 53:6, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Second Corinthians 5:21, “God made Christ to be sin for us.” First Peter 2:24, “He, Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree.” Jesus died as your representative if you’re in Christ.

But God didn’t just reckon Christ’s death to us. He also reckoned His righteousness. Romans 5:19, “By one man’s obedience, the many will be made righteous.” So, as Christ lived a perfect life here, He lived it as your representative. And God sees Him as your representative; and therefore, He sees you as having done what Christ did, that is, having lived a perfect life. But it goes beyond that. God even considered you dying with Christ and being buried with Christ and being raised with Christ as your representative. This is the very point Paul makes in Romans 6. Turn there for a moment Romans 6, Romans 6:1. Paul begins to deal with the issue of sanctification, and he says,

What shall we say then? [in response to justification] Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live

in it?" And then he goes on to make the connection. Here's the theology. Or do you not know [have you never understood this?] that all of us who have been [and here again there's no water--this is talking about that spirit baptism at the moment of salvation] all of us who have been ... [immersed[into Christ Jesus have been ... [immersed] into His death. [Listen, in God's mind, when Christ died as your representative, you died too. You died in the mind of God, on the cross, with Christ. And then it says, verse 4,] Therefore, we ... [were] buried with Him, through that ... [immersion] unto death. [In other words, not only did you die with Christ, but in the mind of God, you were buried with Christ, in the ground. And you were raised with Him so that you could walk in new life.] For if we have ... [been] united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.

You see, when Christ left this earth as your representative, He had already earned all the blessings of salvation for you. He had lived a perfect life that could be credited to you, and He had died the death you should die for your sins. He had done everything. And the Father stored up all that Christ had done.

But understand that those blessings weren't yet yours. The blessings that are ours in Christ still have to be personally applied, and that doesn't happen until the moment of salvation. Although we were eternally loved, in divine election, until the day you trusted in Jesus Christ, you were, according to Paul, later in Ephesians, dead in trespasses and sins, 2:1. You were (we were) children of wrath, 2:3. We were separate from Christ, and without hope and without God in the world, 2:12. That was our condition before the day of our salvation. It was only through God's calling us to Himself, through the salvation He provided, that we actually became beneficiaries of Christ as our representative, and we became truly united with Him. On that day when you came to faith in Christ (you perhaps can remember the time, perhaps you can't) but on that day when you came to genuine faith in Christ, by a work of the Spirit of God you were immersed into Christ, and all that Christ did for you when He lived here became yours. God sees you as having done all that Christ did. In fact, let me put it negatively. God never sees you apart from your representative. When God looks at you, He never sees you apart from Christ, because you

are in Christ. You are inseparably united to Jesus Christ, and that will never change. It's representational.

There's a second word that describes the nature of our union with Christ. Not only is it representational, or representative, but it's spiritual. Spiritual. And again, by this I don't mean some mystical experience. I don't mean that you should go to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses and walk and talk with Jesus. What I do mean by a spiritual union, is that it is a union that is spiritually oriented. Now, this one's hard to get your mind around. We can understand representative a little better. But understanding that this is a spiritual union is a little more difficult. So, the best way for you to get it is for me to give you an illustration. But in this case, I don't have to give you an illustration. God has already given us several illustrations of this spiritual union you enjoy with Christ. For example: one of the powerful images or illustrations that Scripture uses to help us see what this looks like (this spiritual union now) is that of a cornerstone representing Christ, and a building representing us. The picture is that we are tied to, we get our bearings from Christ. He is the source of our stability. He is the source of our growth. He's the source of our direction. He is our cornerstone, from which everything is built around.

Another illustration that's used of this spiritual union is Christ as the trunk of a vine and we as the individual branches. In John 15:1-6, by the way, the cornerstone and building illustration is in Ephesians 2:19-22. This trunk of the vine and branches is in John 15, and this speaks of us as being joined to Christ in such a way that our spiritual life and our spiritual fruit flow to us through Christ, just as happens in a vine with its branches.

Another illustration that Scripture uses of this spiritual union is Christ as the head of a body and us as the members of the body, in Ephesians 1:22-23, and again in Ephesians 4:12-16. What does this mean, that we're the body and Christ is the head? It means that we receive our orders and direction from Christ, just as the members of your body receive its order and direction from your brain.

A fourth illustration is that of a husband, representing Christ, and a wife (that's us) in marriage. In Ephesians 5:23-32. This image speaks of the closeness of our relationship. God uses the most intimate human relationship, marriage, to describe the nature of the spiritual union that we have with Jesus Christ. There's a closeness there that cannot be fully explained.

Now, when I give you those illustrations of the spiritual union, let me give you a danger to be avoided. There's a real temptation that people have to latch on to one of those illustrations and say, yeah, that's the illustration I like. If you attach to one, you will get a distorted view of the nature of our relationship to Christ. It's only together that they round out our understanding. You enjoy real spiritual communion and fellowship with Christ. In what way? Like a building does from a cornerstone. Like branches do from a vine. Like the body does--is related to the head. Like a wife is related to a husband. You, according to I Corinthians 1:9, were called into fellowship with Jesus Christ. Now listen carefully.

If you're a Christian, this is not an experience to be sought. This is a reality to be understood. You already have a spiritual union with Jesus Christ, through which all that you need flows to you. If you're a Christian, you enjoy spiritual union with Christ today. Not only is He your representative in the mind of God, but you enjoy a real spiritual connection to Christ.

I love the illustration that Robert Raymond uses in his systematic theology. Listen to how he describes it. He says, "Scriptures make it clear that, though it is spiritual, this union with Christ is as real as though there were in fact a literal umbilical cord uniting them, reaching all the way from Christ in heaven to the believer on earth." What a great illustration of our spiritual union with Christ. As that baby grows in the womb of a woman, everything that baby needs for life flows to it through that umbilical cord. In the very same way, you and I are, in fact, today, united to Christ in that way spiritually. Everything we need flows to us from Christ. We are united inseparably to Him. So, He's our representative, and spiritually we are joined to Him.

There's a third adjective that describes the nature of our union to Christ. Not only representational, not only spiritual, but thirdly, practical. You see, being in Christ comes with a host of practical benefits. In fact, look at Ephesians 1:3. Every spiritual blessing is in Christ.

That means every. There are none excluded. You enjoy what you enjoy, in the mind of God because you are united to Jesus Christ, because He's your representative, because there's a spiritual union that occurs. I don't have time to turn to or to develop them, but let me give you a short list of the blessings that are yours in Christ. I'm just going to speed through. You listen as I go.

First of all, grace, I Corinthians 1:4; grace is given us in Christ.

Regeneration, 2 Corinthians 5:17; if you are in Christ, you are a new creation.

Justification, 2 Corinthians 5:21; we have become the righteousness of God in Him.

Pardon and forgiveness, Ephesians 1:7; in Him we have redemption through His blood, even forgiveness.

Sanctification comes in Christ, I Corinthians 1:5; in everything, we are enriched in Him.

Eternal life comes from Christ, Romans 6:23; eternal life, that is in Christ Jesus.

Our continual bond to the love of Christ, or to put negatively, the inability for us to be separated from the love of Christ also relates to Christ and being in Him. In Romans 8:39; nothing is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

Our unity with other Christians, Romans 12:5; we are one body in Christ.

The certainty of God's promises to you, 2 Corinthians 1:20; the promises of God are yes in Him.

What about grace to live your Christian life? You need that? This comes also because of our connection to Christ, 2 Timothy 2:1; Paul tells Timothy, be strong in the grace that is in Christ.

We die in Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:18 says those who have fallen asleep in Christ. We stay connected even through death.

We will be resurrected in Christ according to 1 Corinthians 15:22; in Christ all will be made alive.

We will be glorified because of this connection, Romans 8:17, we will be glorified with Him.

What could be more practical than your union with Christ? Everything you enjoy or will enjoy happens to you because you are in Him. It is the fountainhead from which everything else flows. It ensures that all those things for you will occur because God--listen carefully--God will never treat you differently than He will treat Christ, because you are in Christ.

There's an old illustration that sort of summarizes all of this, and I think it will help you.

Imagine for a moment that your life is nothing but a dirty crumpled piece of paper. That's a pretty accurate description, isn't it? We've messed the paper God gave us. We were born with it already dirty because of Adam's sin, but then we've further dirtied it, and we've crumpled it and made a mess of it. Imagine that dirty piece of paper that is you, taken and inserted into a large classic book. A book with a leather binding and beautiful gilded edges and that piece of paper is inserted into the book and the book is then closed. Whatever happens to the book happens to the piece of paper. If you throw the book away, you throw the paper away. If you treasure the book, then you treasure the paper. And even if the paper is dirty and spotted, you don't see it. You just see the book.

The same is true of our relationship with Jesus Christ--of our position. When God looks on us, He sees us in Christ. He sees us never apart from Him, and He treats us as Christ deserves, and not as we deserve. He treats us as if we were His Son. And folks, this is not mind games. We're not making this up. This is reality from God's perspective. This is how God sees reality.

That brings us to the third aspect of our time together this morning. We've looked at the meaning of the phrase "the nature of the union".

Finally, the application of the doctrine. What is the practical application of our study together this morning? The practical application is immense. And there's no way for me to capture it for you, but let me give you two overarching issues, overarching applications.

#1. Understanding and applying this reality is the key to overcoming in your daily battle with sin. Understanding "being in Christ" and applying it to your life is the key to the battle that you have with sin. Turn back to Romans 6. I already walked you through the first part of the chapter where Paul tells us that God sees us as having died in Christ, been buried with Christ, and raised in new life with Christ. But look at how it applies, starting in verse 10.

For the death that ... [Jesus] died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin," Believe it to be true. You died in the mind of God, and now you're alive to God in Christ.... Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its lust, and ... [don't] go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness.... [There are practical ramifications of this doctrine, having to do with our battle with sin.]

If you could ever come to grips with the fact that you are intimately united to Jesus Christ as your representative, and there is a spiritual flow of energy and life to you that enables you to overcome sin in your life, it will revolutionize your life. Oh, you won't become perfect. No one will in this life. But you will see an increasing pattern of holiness and a decreasing pattern of sin. That's the general principle Paul makes here.

And by the way, he applies it very specifically to the issue of immorality. In 1 Corinthians 6:15-18. I won't have you turn there, but in 1 Corinthians 6:15-18, he says, listen, let me just tell you something. If you take your body and you connect it to a prostitute, you are sinning against Christ, in Whom you are. Because you are in Him, because you are connected to Him, don't do it. See, Paul saw the very practical outworkings of this great doctrine in keeping us from sin of all kinds. You're taking Christ, and you're making Him tolerate what you're doing.

A second application, not only is it a help in the battle of sin, but knowing and meditating on your union with Christ is intended to be a source of deep spiritual encouragement. Why did Paul put this here in Romans 1? Why is he talking so much about our union with Christ (being in Christ) in Him? Remember what he's doing? He's teaching us our true standing, because as we come to understand our true position, our true standing, then we will know how to live like Christians. It starts with that understanding.

Every spiritual blessing is ours in Christ. This morning, when God looks at you, He never looks at you separate from Christ. He never sees you separate from Christ. You are in Christ Jesus. This morning, we take of communion together. Communion is really a picture of the reality that we are in Christ. It is a reminder that Christ, as our representative, died, and that, in a spiritual sense, we enjoy ongoing fellowship and communion with Him.

Let's bow our heads together.

Father, we thank You for the wonderful privilege that's ours, to be in Christ. Help us to think on these things, to meditate on these things.

Father, help us to contemplate the reality that He is, in Your mind, always our representative. That we're always tied to Him in Your great mind. Father, I pray that You would help us to plumb the depths of what it means that we enjoy a spiritual union with Him. That just as that baby in the womb gets everything it needs for its physical life through its mother, we get everything that we need for spiritual life through Christ, through the union that we enjoy with Him, which is a current, spiritual reality. Father, teach us these things, and change us as a result.

We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen