

**“Delivered, Transferred, Redeemed, Forgiven”**

*Sermon Notes*

- **Christian maturity flows not from our subjective sense of reality, but from faith in the objective facts of our identity**

*\*If you are in Christ, you are...*

1. Delivered (v.13a)

2. Transferred (v.13b)

3. Redeemed (v.14a)

4. Forgiven (v.14b)

## Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of October 3rd - 9th

### Getting Started

1. We see them nearly everywhere on the pages of our New Testament. Little prepositions attached to the word “Christ”. “*In Christ*”, “*through Christ*”, “*by Christ*”, “*with Christ*”, etc. Hundreds of times these phrases appear. The doctrine of a believer’s union with the Lord Jesus is at once possibly the most familiar and yet under-emphasized teachings in the Scriptures today. For example, read through the opening verses of Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians (1:1-14). How many prepositions can you count? Next, into how many precious realities do these prepositions allow us entrance? (for example: election (1:4), adoption (1:5). How many can you name? Theologian Anthony Hoekema said that: “Once you have your eyes opened to this concept of union with Christ, you will find it almost everywhere in the New Testament.” Are you starting to see it?

### Digging Deeper

2. Though it’s true that the doctrine of union with Christ can become intricate and elaborate - it does not have to be complicated. This is one of the simplest, most vivid, and memorable of the Bible’s teachings - and the images prove it: vine and branches (John 15:1-11); groom and bride (Ephesians 5:25; 2 Corinthians 11:2); temple cornerstone and living stones (Ephesians 2:18-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5); head and body (Colossians 1:18) even clothing and body (Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:20-24; 6:10-20). Take a moment to visit these passages as a group. If a picture is worth a thousand words, what sorts of truths do these pictures preach?
3. Pondering these New Testament images (and using a little bit of sanctified imagination) Ray Ortlund, Sr. wrote of our union with Christ:

“We’re in Him the way a baby’s in a womb - but better. We’re in Him the way a moth is in a chrysalis - but better. We’re in Him the way a deep-sea diver’s in his diving suit - but better. We’re in Him the way birds are in the air, or fish are in the sea - but better. Can you think of other comparisons of how Christians are in Christ? None of them measure up to all the wonderful things it means for a believer to be in Him!”<sup>1</sup>

Ortlund wrote those precious lines in his little book: *Circle of Strength: Become What You Were Meant to Be - A Christ-Enclosed Christian*. Are any of Ortlund’s images helpful to you as you ponder the nature of your union with Christ? Which one(s)? Why? How about you? Are you up to his challenge... ‘Can you think of other comparisons of how Christians are in Christ?’

### Open Your Bible to 2 Corinthians 5:17...

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1 Raymond C. Ortlund, Sr, *Circle of Strength: Become What You Were Meant to Be – A Christ-Enclosed Christian*. Victor Books: Wheaton, IL. 1980.

4. The doctrine of union with Christ is like a treasure chest that once opened exposes us to some of the costliest pearls of New Testament theology. For example, Jesus is full of life. When we put our faith in him, he fills us with his life. The Bible calls this **regeneration**. In union with Christ, we come to life in God's **delivery room**. Savor the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:17 together. Where do you see evidence of the doctrine of union with Christ? What practical impact ought this truth to make in our lives today as believers? How does this shape our pursuit of the folks on our 'Lists of 5'?
5. Jesus Christ is God's one and only Son. The Bible says that those who trust in him are given the right to become children of God, too. This wonderful truth is called **adoption**. In union with Christ, we enter into God's **family room**. Take a look at John 1:12, Galatians 3:26, and Ephesians 1:4-5. Can you spot the doctrine of union with Christ in these verses? One implication of this truth, of course, is that the church is a family. Do you picture our fellowship in these terms? Why or why not? Another implication of this truth is that the fatherless are our unmistakable responsibility (both physically and spiritually). How ought this biblical teaching to inform our pursuit of orphans through legal adoption as well as unbelievers in the context of our evangelism?
6. What's more, Jesus is righteous. Unlike him we all have sinned and as sinners deserve punishment. In God's great love for us, he sent Jesus who willingly bore our punishment in his death on the cross. Through faith in Jesus, we are declared righteous – in fact, we become the very righteousness of God. The Bible calls this **justification**. See Philippians 3:9 and Romans 3:22-24. In union with Christ we are declared innocent and imputed with an everlasting righteousness in God's **court room**. How sinful people can be counted righteous is in some sense a mystery. On the other hand, it does make sense given that when God joins us to Jesus, all that belongs to him becomes ours - including his righteousness. Discuss these things as a group.
7. Jesus became human like us so that we might become holy like him. The Christian life is (gloriously) hard work, but the Holy Spirit is our helper. The Holy Spirit applies to us all that Christ accomplished for us. He will help us to become more like Jesus over the course of our lives. The Bible calls this **sanctification**. In union with Christ, we get into shape in God's **weight room**. There are lots of places where we can see New Testament evidence of how our sanctification becomes a reality because of our union with Christ. Consider passages like: 1 Corinthians 1:30, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:28-29, or 2 Timothy 2:1. What do truths like these mean to you personally in the context of your own temptations and battle against sin? Can you think of anyone in your family or in our church who might benefit from the encouragement of one or two of these verses? If so, what concrete steps might you take toward them with the purpose of encouraging them this week?
8. Last (and in no way least) the Scriptures teach us that after Jesus rose from the dead, he went to heaven in order to prepare a place for us. In this room, there is no suffering or sinning. Jesus is making all things new - and one day, when he returns, we'll live eternally with him in new bodies on a new earth. The Bible calls this **glorification**. In union with Christ, we will spend eternity in God's **ball room**. Not surprisingly, the Scriptures tell us that this reality is only made possible by virtue of our union with Christ (see 1 Corinthians 15:22 and Colossians 3:4). How often do you think of heaven? What do you most look forward to in the kingdom to come? What will it be like to live on a new

earth with the curse lifted, every manifestation of suffering and sin removed, and Jesus as the uncontested King over it all?

9. Without a doubt, the doctrine of union with Christ is one deeply rooted in the Holy Scriptures and it has profound implications for our lives as believers. The Christian life is neither possible nor even comprehensible apart from it. Regeneration, adoption, justification, sanctification, and glorification come to us only courtesy of this stunning biblical doctrine. As John Calvin wrote: "We must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us." Yet in Christ, by Christ, through Christ - in union with Christ - these realities are all ours. Close your time as a group by praising and thanking God for our union with Christ, praying for sharper sight to spot this teaching in our study of Scripture, and for a passion to spread these truths to others.