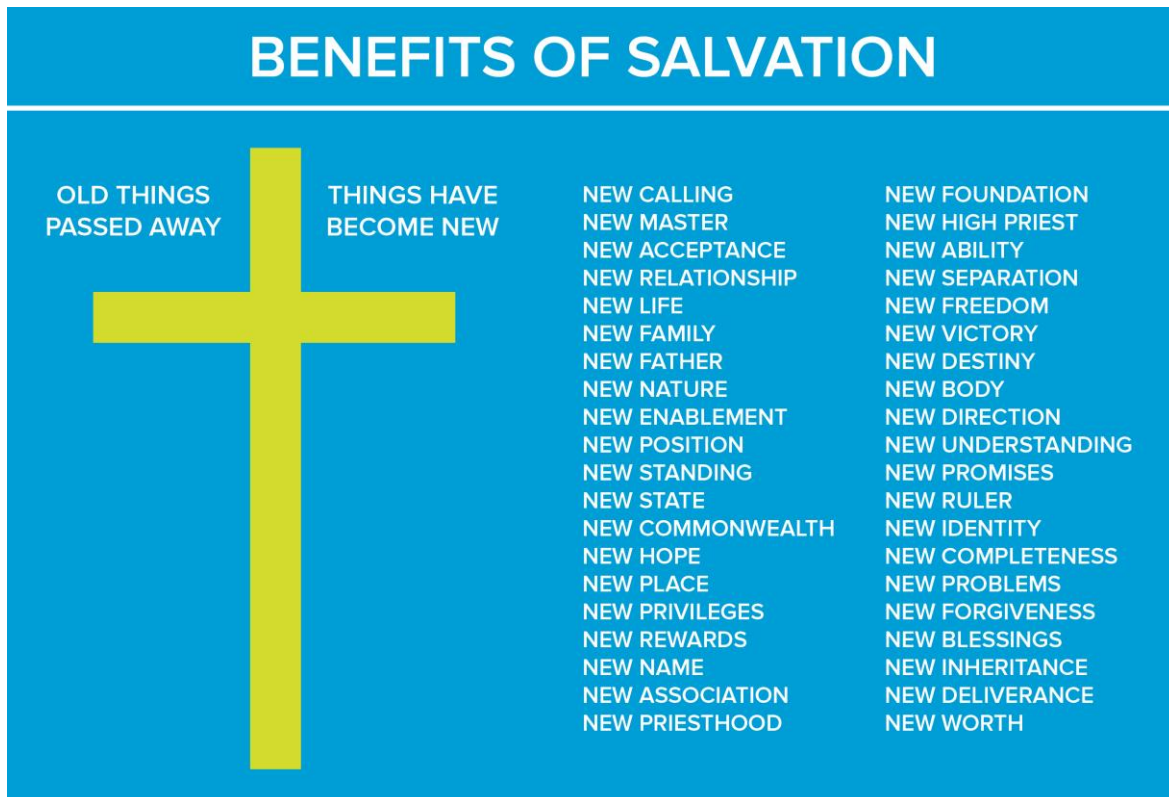




Lesson 13: Union with Christ

One of the greatest blessings of the believer in Jesus Christ is the union that is formed once faith has been placed in Jesus Christ. This kind of union was never mentioned nor taught in the Old Testament. It is a truth revealed to us who are in the Church, the Bride of Christ.

Attachment: Riches of Grace, Lewis Chafer's list found in his Systematic Theology: read and review these riches of grace and praise God. It is a bountiful list which outlines how we go from the rags of our sins to the riches His of grace.



Outline:

1. The Promise of Union with Christ
2. A Positional Truth: Union with Christ
3. A Possession of the Believer: Union with Christ
4. Who Performs this Union with Christ?
5. Pictures of this Union with Christ
 - Vine and Branches; John 15
 - Building/household; Ephesians 2:19-22
 - Body of Christ; Eph. 3:6; 4:1-16; 5:30; 1 Cor. 12
 - Bride of Christ; Ephesians 5:22-33
 - Temple of God; 1 Cor. 3:17; 6:15-20
 - Adam now Christ; Romans 5:12-6:10

1. **The Promise of Union with Christ:** John 14:18-21, 23, 25

Also see Matthew 3:11 a future time when the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit would begin.

2. **A Positional Truth: Union with Christ:**

How God the Father sees you in Jesus Christ is a positional truth. It is in type and pattern like God seeing us *in Adam*, but now sees us *in Christ*; Romans 5:14.

Pay attention to the verses that speak of you being *in Christ*, *in Jesus*, *with Christ*, and you will see how this relationship is mentioned over and over in the New Testament.

This is a truth that is a fact in the mind of God. It is not a fictional status but one that is true. Positional truth relates to our standing in Christ. This standing is perfect because we are seen in Him who is perfect; Colossians 2:9-10. We are complete in Christ.

There is a contrast between our **perfect standing** because we are **seen in Christ**, and our **imperfect state** on earth.

Standing: _____ State: _____

Positional truth is not felt, experienced, or known by any other means than the words of God. It is true because God says it is. So if I asked you, are you perfect? You could answer it “Yes” and

“No.” If you are asking how the Father views me *in Christ*, I am perfect. At the same time I could say “No, I am not perfect.” I sin, I am prone to wander, and I seek to escape temptation. This is our state of reality in a sinful world. This will end once we are in heaven.

3. Our Possession of Christ is a part of our union with Christ.

Not only are we said to be *in Christ*, but He is *in us*.

Father is in us: John 14:20-23

Son is in us: Colossians 1:27; 1 John 5:12-13

Holy Spirit is in us: Romans 8:9-11; John 7:37-39

Christ is our possession (eternal life John 17:3) as well as our position before God.

4. Who Performs the Union of the Believer with Christ?

Matthew 3:11 speaks of Jesus Christ baptizing in fire and with the Holy Spirit. The fire baptism is one of judgment: to burn up. The baptism *with* or *by* or *in* the Holy Spirit is one of blessing.

Acts 1:5 believers are told to await the coming of the Holy Spirit to begin the Church/Grace/New Covenant relationship of God with His people.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, believers were then baptized by the Holy Spirit.

There has been much theological debate over the meaning of “the Baptizing work of the Holy Spirit.” Traditional Pentecostals and Charismatics interpret this to be an experience that is to be accompanied by speaking in tongues.

Others understand the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit to be that ministry of the Spirit whereby He joins the believer to the Body of Christ at the point of receiving Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 “For in one Spirit (or by one Spirit) we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”

Galatians 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

The Holy Spirit forms the union of God’s people with the Body of Christ as well as with Christ.

5. The Pictures of Our Union with Jesus Christ:

- a. _____: John 15
- b. _____: Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5
- c. _____: Ephesians 3:6; 4:1-16; 5:30; 1 Corinthians 12
- d. _____: Ephesians 5:22-33
- e. _____: 1 Cor. 3:17; 6:15-20; Eph. 2:21-22
- f. _____: Romans 5:14

In Adam

- One act of sin = _____
- Condemned/penalty
- _____ reigns
- One represents _____
- _____
- _____ condemns us

In Christ

- One act of substitution
= _____
- Declared righteous/_____
- Righteousness/life reign
- One represents _____
- One to praise
- _____ rescues us

“IN CHRIST/WITH CHRIST”: Romans 6:1-4

- _____ with Christ
- _____ with Christ
- _____ with Christ
- _____ in Newness of Life

Application to us: Romans 6:5-10

1. Died with Him and will be resurrected with him: 5
2. *The old man*, what we were in Adam, was crucified with Christ. . . .

in order that (*Hina* purpose clause) our body as an instrument of sin may be rendered inoperative or unemployed.

No longer is the body a slave to sin!

3. Death frees us from sin: 7

People in the cemetery have no problem with sinning. But our death to sin is not the cemetery but the cross—our co-crucifixion with Jesus Christ.

This is a FACT in the mind of God!

Jesus Christ has not only died for our *sins*, He has taken us with Him to the cross and let us die with Him so that our future life will be one of “resurrected—newness of life” lived on the other side of the tomb (see Galatians 2:20).

4. Our history and future are forever identified with Christ: 8-10.

Next Lesson:

Wednesday, April 22nd we will pick up Romans 6 as we study “**Sanctification**” and the way God intends for us to live for Christ.



Break Out Session – Lesson 13

Group Discussion Background

In each of our break out sessions we will probe three aspects of the truths presented during each class through a series of discussion questions as described below.

WHAT: What is the key informational content?

SO WHAT: What is the implication of this information? Or said another way, why is the truth of this information important?

WHAT NOW: How will you apply this truth or what will you do now that you know this truth?

Our goal for these classes is not simply to increase our knowledge, but for lives to be transformed by truth. (Romans 12:2)

Discussion Questions: (25 minutes)

Ask the group at least 2-3 of the following questions and allow the group to thoroughly explore and discuss.

1. In hearing the teaching and doing the homework related to being in union with Christ, was there anything you heard or studied that created a question in your mind or was difficult to understand?
2. What are the four aspects of this theological truth that are represented by each of the following verses? 1) 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2) Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20; 3) 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 3:2; 4) Matthew 28:20; 1 John 1:3.
3. Were there any key insights you observed about being in union with Christ and what this truth means for us today? Think about some of the things that are true of you because of this union.
4. Do you have any awareness in your day-to-day life of Christ living in you (Galatians 2:20)? What would change in your life if you had a stronger awareness of Christ living in you throughout the day? How about when you experience various trials and temptations or opportunities and joys?

Time to Care – Share – Bear (15 minutes)

During this time, the group is encouraged to share in each other's lives and demonstrate care for one another by bearing one another up through prayer.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Answer any remaining questions and clarify the homework for the following week.



Lesson 13 Homework

1. Read Grudem, pgs. 116-130.
2. Define “sanctify” and “holy.”

Does sanctifying something mean “to make it holy” or “to set it apart for holy use”?

3. Write out the answers to all of these questions for yourself and then pray about them in your devotion time.
Grudem, Question #1, Pg. 128: Can you remember in your own experience the definite beginning to sanctification that occurred when you became a Christian? Did you sense a clear break from the ruling power and love of sin in your life? Do you really believe that you are even now dead to the ruling power and love of sin in your life? How can this truth of the Christian life be of help to you in specific areas of your life where you still need to grow in sanctification?

Question # 6, g. 128: Are there areas where you have struggled for years to grow in sanctification, but with no progress at all in your life? Has this chapter helped you regain hope for progress in those areas?

4. Be sure to know the difference between justification and sanctification.



The Riches of Divine Grace

Ephesians 1:3-10; 1:15-21; 2:1-10; and 3:7-12

I. The Essential Character of the Riches of God's Grace

- A. They are not experienced.
- B. They are not progressive.
- C. They are not related to human merit.
- D. They are eternal in their character.
- E. They are known only by revelation.
- F. They are the result of God's choice and power and His alone.
- G. They are not the result of anything that man can do.
- H. They are predicated on a relationship and the lasting value of a relationship (Rollins).

1) In the eternal plan of God Romans 8:28; I Peter 1:2

- a. Foreknown (Romans 8:29, Acts 2:23; I Peter 1:2,20) - "God foreknew from all eternity every step in the entire program of this universe to its minutest detail."
- b. Predestinated (Romans 8:29) - God determined beforehand that which comes to pass. It is used in conjunction with the Elect.
- c. Elect of God (I Thess 1:4; I Peter 1:2; Romans 8:33; Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1) - "The term *elect*, as related to Christians, is distinctive in that it designates those who are Predestinated, but with only an implication relative to destiny. They are the elect in the present age and will manifest the grace of God in future ages.
- d. Chosen (Ephesians 1:4) This word emphasizes the "peculiar act of God which separates unto Himself His elect who are both foreknown and predestinated. The Christian bears the high distinction that he has been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world."
- e. Called (Romans 8:30, Hebrews 1:14; I Thess. 5:24) - The word, "called," is used for those "who, at a given time, are unregenerate but who in the divine purpose are to become regenerate. The angels are not only ministering spirits in behalf of those who are now saved, but of them also who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14)."

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| 2) | Redeemed | Ephesians 1:7; I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor.5:15 |
| 3) | Reconciled | II Cor. 5:19-20; Ephesians 2:1-6; 4:22-24 |
| 4) | Related to God through propitiation | I John 2:2 |
| 5) | Forgiven all trespasses | Colossians 2:13 |
| 6) | Vitally conjoined to Christ for the judgment of the <i>old man, unto a new walk</i> | Romans 6:1-10 |
| 7) | Free from the Law | Romans 6:14; 7:4 |
| 8) | Children of God | John 1:12-13; I John 3:2 |
| 9) | Adopted | Ephesians 1:4-5 |
| 10) | Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ | I Peter 2:5 |
| | Made righteous | II Corinthians 5:21 |
| | Sanctified positionally | I Corinthians 6:11 |
| | Perfected forever | Hebrews 10:14 |
| | Favored us with GRACE in Christ | Ephesians 1:6 |
| | Made Meet (i.e. <i>rendered fit</i>) | Colossians 1:12 |
| 11) | Justified | Romans 3:24; 5:1 |
| 12) | Made capable of drawing near to God | Ephesians 2:13; James 4:8; Hebrews 10:22 |
| 13) | Delivered from Power of Darkness | Colossians 1:3a; II Peter 1:11 |
| 14) | Translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love | Colossians 1:13b |
| 15) | On the Rock, Jesus Christ | I Peter 2:6; I Cor. 3:11; Ephesians 2:20 |
| 16) | A gift from God the Father to Christ | John 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24 |
| 17) | Circumcised in Christ | Colossians 2:11 |

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| 18) | Partakers of the Holy and Royal Priesthood | I Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 1:6 |
| 19) | A chosen generation, a Holy nation, a peculiar people | I Peter 2:9 |
| 20) | Heavenly citizens | Philippians 3:20; II Cor. 5:8 |
| 21) | Of the family and household of God | Ephesians 2:19 |
| 22) | In the fellowship of the Saints | John 17:11, 21-23 |
| 23) | A heavenly association (i.e. our present realm of association with Christ) | |
| | Partners with Christ in life | Colossians 1:27; 3:4 |
| | Partners in Position | Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 2:6 |
| | Partners with Christ in Service | I Corinthians 3:9; 15:58 |
| | Partners with Christ in Suffering | Philippians 1:29; I Peter 4:12-13 |
| | Partners with Christ in Prayer | John 14:12-12 |
| | Partners with Christ in Betrothal | II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27 |
| 24) | Having access to God | |
| | Access into His grace | Romans 5:12-17 |
| | Access unto the Father | Ephesians 2:18 |
| | Access IS reassuring (i.e. approach the Father <i>with confidence</i>) | Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-20 |
| 25) | Within the much more care of God | Romans 5:8-10 |
| | Objects of His Love | I John 3:16 |
| | Objects of His Grace | |
| | Salvation | Ephesians 2:7-9 |

Safekeeping	Romans 5:2
Service	John 17:18; Ephesians 4:7
Instruction	Titus 2:11-13
Objects of His Power	Ephesians 1:19; Philippians 2:13
Objects of His Faithfulness	Hebrews 13:5; I Thessalonians 5:24
Objects of His Peace	Colossians 3:15; Galatians 5:22
Objects of His Consolation	II Thessalonians 2:16-17
Objects of His Intercession	Romans 8:26
26) His inheritance	Ephesians 1:18
27) The inheritance of the Saints	I Peter 1:4; Colossians 3:23-24
28) Light in the Lord	Ephesians 5:8; I John 1:23
29) Vitally united to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit	I Thess. 1:1; Ephesians 4:6; Romans 8:1 John 14:20; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 2:12
30) Blessed with the earnest or first-fruits of the Spirit	II Cor. 1:22; Ephesians 1:14; Romans 8:23
31) Glorified	Romans 8:18, 30; Colossians 3:4
32) Complete in Him	Colossians 2:9-10
33) Possessing every spiritual blessing	Ephesians 1:3

Taken from:

Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, Volume 3, pages 235-266.