

Atonement and the Cross of Christ lesson 12 4Q 2008

United to Christ

Read Memory Text – 2Cor 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Thoughts? What does it mean to be “in” Christ?

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. John 17:20-23

Does the above text shed light on what it means to be in Christ? How do you see it?

Does “in Christ” mean:

- In unity with Him?
- Union of mind, method, principle, motive?
- Harmony of values, morals, ethics?
- Oneness in desire, longing, drives?
- Loving others more than self?
- Being a new creation via the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

Other Bible metaphors or example to being a new creature?

- But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:16
- No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Romans 2:29

- In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. " John 3:3
- HEB 8:10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.
- EZE 36:22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, `This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. EZE 36:24 " `For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ I will save you from all your uncleanness.

How do we become new? Who does the renewing? Who does the recreating? Who does the cleansing? Who does the healing? What is our job? How do we experience this healing?

- Our job is to surrender in trust to our heavenly Physician
- God's job is to recreate, renew, heal us
- Our job is to choose to follow the prescription

- God's job is to strengthen us to follow His prescription

What is it that interferes with our ability to do this? Why is it so hard to experience this healing?

- Believing lies – many believe they cannot be changed, healed renewed here, that they get forgiveness here but renewal at the second coming.
- Believing false gospels or constructs of God that undermine genuine trust
- Habits, ingrained patterns of acting and behaving which take time to change. But when an old habit occurs many get discouraged believe a lie that they can't change and quit
- Trusting feelings over evidence
- Valuing the opinions of others over truth
- Ultimately, feelings of fear rather than motives of love

Why is it importance to realize that the plan of salvation is about renewal, regeneration, recreation not mere pardon or forgiveness?

I have many patients who come to see me who have suffered under sin. They have been overcome, they have made decision for which they now experience guilt, shame, self-loathing; what happens to that guilt, shame and self-loathing when a person is made new, when it is “no longer I that live but Christ lives in me”? What happens when we realize we are not the same person we used to be?

In the judgment what is the issue that determines where each sinner ends up? Their condition – we are all born terminal “dead in trespasses and sin” but we have been offered a free remedy that will cure us. All who have opened their minds to receive the remedy are transformed and thus will experience eternal life, but those who reject the remedy will be lost.

What is the remedy? Jesus, His perfection, His character, His life, which is downloaded from Him, via the HS to us!

The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God." Ps. 40:8. {DA 175.5}

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

Any Bible texts which support this view? The text from Ezekiel 36 above, Heb 8:10, 2Pet 1:4...

How do we experience this renewal, this regeneration? By trusting Jesus, by coming to know Him, by purposely inviting Him into our lives, by asking Him to send His Spirit to rewrite our minds, thoughts, desires to be like His. Then choosing to apply what He prescribes for our lives.

Does this mean we lose our individuality? No, we keep our individuality our personality but it is freed from the encumbrances of fear and selfishness, free to love others, free to stand for the right, free to give ourselves for others, free to stand up into our true selves, children of God!

Read key thought – thoughts? What do you understand the significance of the phrase “the new humanity instituted by Him in His own person”?

Read first paragraph “The sacrifice....” Thoughts? Christ’s sacrifice absolutely provided everything we need for salvation. The Cross will be our science and song through all eternity, thus we will constantly be gaining insights into what Christ has done for us at the Cross. But what do we currently understand Christ to have provided for us through His life, death and resurrection?

- Reveal the truth to win us to trust
 - Truth about the Father
 - Truth about Himself
 - Truth about God’s use of power
 - Truth about what God does to sinners
 - Truth about Satan
 - Truth about why death comes
 - Truth about why the law cannot be broken
 - Truth about the basis of life
 - Truth that outward obedience does not make us friends of God and rituals don’t heal
 - Other truths?

- Destroyed sin and cured our condition
 - Overcame the infection to act in self-interest with perfect love thus destroying sin, satan and death (Heb 2:14, 2Tim 1:9,10).

What do you think about: "This incorporation into Christ, through the ritual of baptism, is our participation in His death and resurrection; it's our recognition that His death is our death because He died as our Substitute."?

Does a ritual incorporate us into Christ? Or does the ritual of baptism merely symbolically represent what has already transpired? Does a wedding ring join people in the loving unity of marriage or does it symbolize what has transpired in their hearts?

Read Isaiah 1:11-18:

"The multitude of your sacrifices--
 what are they to me?" says the LORD.
 "I have more than enough of burnt offerings,
 of rams and the fat of fattened animals;
 I have no pleasure
 in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

ISA 1:12 When you come to appear before me,
 who has asked this of you,
 this trampling of my courts?

ISA 1:13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings!
 Your incense is detestable to me.
 New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations--
 I cannot bear your evil assemblies.

ISA 1:14 Your New Moon festivals and your
 appointed feasts
 my soul hates.
 They have become a burden to me;

I am weary of bearing them.

ISA 1:15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,

I will hide my eyes from you;
even if you offer many prayers,
I will not listen.
Your hands are full of blood;

ISA 1:16 wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds
out of my sight!
Stop doing wrong,

ISA 1:17 learn to do right!
Seek justice,
encourage the oppressed.
Defend the cause of the fatherless,
plead the case of the widow.

ISA 1:18 "Come now, let us reason together,"
says the LORD.
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.

Thoughts – what is going on? What is the problem? What are the people doing? All the rituals that God instructed them to do, yet God is not pleased why? Because their hearts and minds were not transformed, they were still selfish and wicked. God wanted them renewed in heart, mind and character.

What about baptism. Does the ritual of baptism do anything to heal us? Is it possible to misunderstand baptism and think the ritual has some merit to cleanse, that by undergoing the ritual somehow unites us with Christ? Does it?

Is the ritual of baptism our incorporation into Christ's death or symbolize our incorporation into His death?

Read Romans 6:1-4

RO 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. NIV

Romans 6:1 What, then, should we say about this amazing healing plan? Should we spread the infection of distrust and selfishness, cause more devastation and destruction so that the power of God's healing solution may be more fully displayed? ² Absolutely not! We have taken the antidote, and the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has been purged from our hearts and minds; how then, can we choose to be reinfected with distrust of God and practice selfish methods again? ³ Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed in the truth of Christ Jesus were immersed in selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? ⁴ We symbolically demonstrate we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that just as Jesus arose from the dead displaying the life giving glory of the Father, we too live a new life displaying God's glorious character in our lives. Jennings paraphrase

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

The Two Humanities – what are they? At their base level how would you describe the two humanities?

- Terminal and Eternal?

Thoughts about the lesson's comparison of the humanity we inherent from Adam and the one we obtain through Christ?

Number six says Adam's humanity "brought condemnation" while Christ's brought "justification." Thoughts?

How do you hear this? Does it sound judicial? When I present the healing model many people, who like this view, ask why is there so much legal language in the Bible? Here is an example Romans 5:18 is often used to support the legal model. Let's read that verse:

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

Thoughts? Does it sound legal? It kind of does, but what does the very next verse say?

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were **made** sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be **made** righteous.
Romans 5:19

Does that sound legal or does that sound constitutional – in other words in our very constitution, our very nature, our very being, our very condition?

Then what would be the cause of our condemnation? Our condition as sinners i.e. our condition is terminal and what would be the cause of our "justification"? Our healed condition

we are actually transformed, set right, rightified, put right by Jesus Christ, as the verse says we are actually “made righteous.”!

Read first paragraph “The fall of Adam...” thoughts? What does “spiritual death” mean?

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2:1-5

What kind of death is being described in this text? Are the people physically dead? What is the difference between spiritual death and physical death?

Does this text have any bearing?

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

The word soul is psuche from which we get psyche, means our individuality, identity, personhood.

Would spiritual death be that state in which one has severed themselves from their source of life but the body is still alive, slowly dying but still alive? A state in which the mind is operating on principles that inevitably lead to death?

Physical example – tie weights on your legs and jump in the ocean – cut yourself off from the source of life, in this case air, but for awhile still alive.

Sin is what? Distrust of God based on lies which severe the circle of love and trust, cut us off from the source of life which is God Himself. Thus when Adam sinned the human species was severed from the circle of life and was dying, except for God's interventions to save and restore.

This is demonstrated in the OT sacrificial system, when they confessed sin on the head of the animal the sinner would then cut the circulation. The animal is dead, but not immediately dead. It took some time as the heart continued to beat and pumped the blood out. Likewise when Adam sinned He severed His connection with God, His condition was now terminal, without divine intervention He would die. Christ came to reverse what sin did to mankind and restore mankind back into unity with God.

And the OT system the blood represented the life of Christ was taken throughout the system revealing His life cleansing, renewing, regenerating, recreating, unifying and resurrecting the Spirit Temple as the Ephesians text says.

Read second paragraph “How then...” thoughts? What do you understand this paragraph to mean?

MONDAY

First sentence is excellent, “The ultimate goal of Christ’s work of salvation is to make all things new, thus permanently undoing the damage caused by sin.” – thoughts about this?

Read second paragraph – thoughts? No question the work of redemption is one of recreation, what about the anthropomorphic (human centered) view of this issue, do you agree with that view?

Is the problem of sin primarily and directly related to the fall of humans?

Where did sin originate? In heaven, with who? Lucifer who was an angel and 1/3 of the angels rebelled into sin before humans did. Is sin limited to humans only? What is so significant about the fall of humans? Why was Adam's fall so devastating to God's cause? Because Adam was created as part of the answer to Satan's rebellion. Mankind was created in God's image with the power of procreation and dominion to rule and they were created as the repository of God's living law of love. Thus, in the middle of the heavenly war over God's trustworthiness this world became God's lesson book, God's theater to reveal the answers to stop the sin problem (1Cor 4:9). Satan targeted this planet to co-opt God's lesson book and turn mankind into his agents to misrepresent God.

The last paragraph cites Ephesians 2:15 about Christ making one man out of the two and thus bringing unity to all mankind, doing away with the walls of division. What do you understand this to mean?

Christ unified humanity in His person by taking our sinful condition upon Himself, uniting it with His divine self and thus curing our humanity in His own perfect, selfless life. There is now one humanity and we can experience this reality in our lives as our sinful self is brought into unity with His divine perfect self thus the two become one and selfishness is eradicated by His love and we become partakers of the divine nature!

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph "In other words..." thoughts? How does this work? What enables us to experience this? Love and trust which allows us to surrender our selves to God and resist the internal drive of "save self".

WEDNESDAY

Any further thoughts on what it means to be “in Christ”?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “There is a...” thoughts? What does it mean in day to day life when we walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh? Does this mean that once we are filled with the Spirit we are beyond making spiritual mistakes?

What about Peter after his conversion, after Pentecost when he was filled with the spirit, what did he do regarding the Jews? Did Paul have to confront him openly? Why? Was Peter in the wrong? What does this mean? Wasn't Peter an Apostle and Prophet? Wasn't he walking in the Spirit?

To me it means that even though we have been converted, even though our desires and motives are to do all God would have us do, we still operate in fallen bodies, with fallen brains which have many habit patterns that take time to change. We have many biases which take time to remove and many things we still don't understand correctly. Thus, those walking in the Spirit make mistakes and can be wrong, not wrong in motive or desire to do what is right, but wrong in their actions, choices, conclusions on the journey to ultimate perfection. But what Spirit led people do demonstrate is the capacity to learn from mistakes, willingness to follow the truth, openness to new light, perspectives, ideas and willingness to renounce error when the light of evidence and truth is brought to bear. Peter did this!

How do we relate to those who we view as having Spiritual gifts, insights, light or wisdom? Do we surrender our thinking to them? Do we think for ourselves?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What constitutes the church? Is it denominationally defined or is it constructed of all those who have put their lives in Christ's hands?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? How do you understand this insight? Do you hear this as Jesus doing something to the Father so that the Father can now find it in His heart to love us? Or do you hear it as Christ doing something to mankind so that we can enter into God’s love as Christ does? How does God love His Son?