

Alright everyone, I think we're probably going to get started here. I see a few more are walking in, so I'll let you all get seated. Today we're going to continue through our series on union with Christ. You remember on our first lesson we kind of introduced the concept by asking the big question, what is union with Christ?

And that's really the question we're asking over this entire series. And we're really only scratching the surface. This is something you spend your entire life studying. But we did our best to try to give a brief, succinct definition, really just kind of set the groundwork for us.

And we said that union with Christ is when we define our relationship with God in terms of our relation to Christ. It's defining our relation to God in terms of our relation to Christ. And we said that it was foundational, that this unifying principle. And then, if you'll remember, we also talked about the We talked about how it's foundational, and one of the ways it's foundational is this idea of the old Adam and the new Adam, Christ. And how these functions as the deep foundations for this union. How we are either, all of us are born in union with Adam, receiving all the curses and all of the sinful condition that he earned.

And that when we're saved, what that means is we're transferred to being in union with Christ from being in union with Adam, so that we receive all the blessings and all of the holy condition, all of the sanctifying power of Christ. Well, today, we're gonna delve a little bit more into what it means to be in union with Christ. Last time, we kind of were talking, we were comparing, contrasting these. Today, we're really gonna focus in on what is true of being in union with Christ, the indicatives of union.

Those of you who are here who are teachers, who taught English, will know the difference between an indicative And an imperative. An indicative is a statement about what is. I am wearing a suit jacket. An imperative would be something like, Hunter, put on a black suit jacket. That's not something that's true, but because it's an imperative, it's saying you need to do something that presumably you're not doing. An indicative is saying this is what's true of you, whether you like it or not.

And that is what we're going to be focusing on today. But before we sort of get into the weeds, let's open with a word of prayer. Our Father and our God, as we look into this great doctrine, as we continue to study it, we pray that you would cause it to not just go through our ears into our heads, but that it would sink down into our hearts, into our affections, that you would store our affections to Christ. That by learning more about him, we might grow to love him more. We ask that in Jesus' name, amen. All right, so we're gonna be looking at the Indicatives of the Union, and those of you who know your Bibles really well, if you can see these major points, have probably recognized them.

This is coming from Galatians 2.20. So if you all have your Bibles, I encourage you to turn there. This is gonna be kind of our foundational text as we look at the Indicatives of the Union. What is true of us since we are in union with Christ?

So Galatians 2.20. It reads as follows. This is Paul speaking to the Galatians. That is the basis of what it means to be in union with Christ. If you want a one text that sort of encapsulates the indicatives of being in union with Christ.

That's your text right there. And so we're gonna be proceeding through this text, not necessarily chronologically, looking at it in the order Paul explains it, but in the logical order.

And it begins with Christ died for me. Christ died for me. Right then and there. Christ died for me. And we see that right here in the verse where it says, he loved me and gave himself for me. Notice the motivation here. We've been getting into the weeds here. We've talked a lot about union with Adam, union with Christ. We're talking about what is true of us. We're delving into some doctrine here. And it's easy for us to lose sight in all of the categories and all of talk of states, conditions, and so forth, which are important. The real foundation of it.

All of this begins because Jesus loves you. That is why ultimately you are in union with Christ. You are in union with Christ ultimately because Jesus loved you. Jesus loved you. Ephesians 1 says that in love he predestined us. In love he predestined us. Before the world was created, before God spoke the words, let there be light. God loved you. Jesus loved you and purposed to save you. If you are in Christ, that is what is true of you. All of this begins from this foundation of love, and this is not simply a New Testament thing.

Go back to Deuteronomy, where God is talking to the people of Israel, and he says, it's not, I didn't choose you, Israel. I didn't choose you to be my people because you were righteous. You are stubborn people. I didn't choose you because you were powerful, because you were numerous, because of what you could do for me. You were tiny people. Your father, Abraham, was barren. He had no one, no son, and a wife 80 years old. So why did God choose Israel? God says, I chose you because I loved you. And that is what is true of you. God chose you because he loved you.

Back to the New Testament, Romans 5.8.

God demonstrates his own love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God demonstrates his own love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Even when we were slaves to sin, even when we were in union with Adam, he died for us.

That's how he demonstrates that love. That is the motivating factor behind it. He loved us, and he gave himself for us. He gave himself for our reconciliation. This is speaking to this idea of reconciliation. If y'all read the chapter, you'll know he spends an entire chapter basically talking about this concept of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is the bringing together of two people who are at enmity with each other, two enemies. It's bringing enemies together, bringing them back into relationship. That's what a lot of family counseling is. You have two family members who have deep hurt with each other. And the family counselor's job is to try to bring about some form of reconciliation, some form of forgiveness to restore that relationship. And that is what has happened in Christ. We have been reconciled to God. And if we're gonna understand this idea of reconciliation, we need to go back for just a second and talk about alienation in Adam. If we're gonna appreciate where we are, we have to know where we've been. Where were we?

Remember last time, we talked about in Adam, we were enemies of God from birth. We were alienated from God from birth. But apart from anything we've done, from the moment we were conceived in the womb, we were a member of a fallen race in union with Adam, and thus, we were alienated from God.

We were children of wrath. But even though that began from the moment we were born, it proceeded into our actions. It became intentional. We were children of wrath, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit, now at work in the sons of disobedience. Even though we were born in the state of being alienated from God, and we acted like we were alienated from God, because we were. And this was inescapable. Nothing we could do could bring us out of that union with Adam. There's the famous line from one of my favorite hymns, Rock of Ages.

Nothing where he says, where he says, could my tears forever flow? Could my zeal no respite know? You might be zealous for something for a while. Have you ever had this obsession with something where you have this idea, you get this idea fixed in your head, I'm going to do this thing, I am going to complete this project, and this zeal just fills you and you find yourself being more productive in two hours than you've been in your entire life. I've had a couple of moments like that, it's wonderful. I wish my zeal, no respite, would know. It would be great.

But the point is, even if a zeal to keep God's law, even if a zeal to get out of Adam were to overcome us, and no respite would know, that zeal would never end, we could not escape. Nothing in our hands we bring, simply to the cross we cling. Could our tears forever flow?

This is very important because sometimes, in our talk about repentance, we can speak as though repentance earns salvation, earns forgiveness, as though God forgives you because you're sorry. That's not true. If you believe that God's forgiveness is somehow dependent on a certain level of sorrow, you're gonna be, you are going to, that is the path to despair. Because Satan's gonna come to you and he's gonna say, oh, God can't forgive you, you weren't sorry enough.

Work a little harder, work up some tears. Come on, people, you realize how bad that sin was? You need to cry. You didn't cry? You must not be sorry enough. God's not gonna forgive you. No, our forgiveness does not rest, our reconciliation does not rest on our tears. Doesn't rest on our works, doesn't rest on our tears. Could our tears forever flow? We could not get out of Adam. We could not be forgiven. So what is the basis of our reconciliation?

How were we taken from Adam into Christ? How were we reconciled? we were reconciled by an exchange, an exchange. One of the things that God did for the people of Israel that's really helpful, obviously helpful for them, but it's still helpful for us today, it's one of the reasons we read our Old Testament, is he gave them the Old Testament sacraments, the Old Testament sacrifices. And these sacrifices, these ceremonies, well, they are not required for Christians today, They are instructive for Christians today. We can look back on them and learn something about how reconciliation works, how we stand forgiven before God. And one of the key ceremonies is the Day of Atonement. This really illustrates how we're reconciled to God. Those of you who are familiar with this ceremony will know that it had two parts.

And the two parts centered on two goats. You had goat number one who was for the Lord, and the other goat that was the scapegoat. And the first goat was taken and was slaughtered, and its blood was sprinkled on the Holy of

Holies. And the other goat, the priest would take it outside the city, lay his hands on that goat, and confess over it all the sins of the people. and then send it out into the wilderness to die alone of dehydration, away from the people, outside of the camp, outside of the presence of God.

And in these two goats, we have what it took for your reconciliation. On the one hand, Christ had to die. His blood, his life had to be applied to you. His righteousness, his perfect righteousness had to be applied to you so that you would be holy. That's the first goat. The second goat is the second part, where the wrath that you deserve, separation from God, your alienation from God had to be laid on that goat. All of your sins had to be placed on that goat and sent off into the wilderness.

That's what Christ was doing on the cross. Why do you think it was so important that the cross had to be outside the city? The cross was not in Jerusalem. The cross was on Golgotha, the place of the skull outside the city walls. Christ became our scapegoat.

Christ took upon himself that alienating wrath that we deserve and he gives us his perfect righteousness. That is the great exchange. He took the punishment that Adam deserved and fulfilled what we could not. That is how we're reconciled to God. And because of this reconciliation, because we have been reconciled to God, it changes how we look at things.

This is something that we see in 2 Corinthians 5.16.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. So we have this, we have here regarding according to the flesh versus regarding him according to the spirit. Regarding each other according to the flesh versus regarding him according to the spirit. To regard something according to the flesh is to regard it according to what your physical eyes can see. and really to regard it as someone in Adam.

We look at each other, we might say, well, you know, I'm more righteous than that guy. That guy's probably more righteous than me. We regard everything on this horizontal level. To regard someone according to Christ, to regard each other according to Christ, is to have a vertical dimension.

And to say, that person's in Adam. That person's in Christ. That person in Adam, he needs to hear the gospel. That person in Christ, I need to regard him as more important than myself. Because he's my brother. To regard Christ according to the flesh is to say, well, he's a good teacher. Nice enough guy. Seems like a decent guy to listen to.

To regard him not according to the flesh, to regard him according to the spirit, to say he's my savior, I am in union with him. That is what reconciliation does, it changes the way we look at things. And that all comes back to how Christ died for me. Christ died for me, thus I have been reconciled to God. The second thing that we see about the indicatives of the union. Christ died for me. I live by faith. I live by faith. Now, we obviously see that in the text. By life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God. Now, what is faith? How do we define faith? Faith is

something that can be easily misunderstood, and it's a word that's used a lot, and it's worth just a moment to define. Classically, Christians have defined faith in terms of three things.

Faith involves knowledge. Knowledge. If you're going to believe something, if you're going to have faith in something, you first have to know at least something about what that something is. If I have no knowledge of someone, I can't have faith in them. If I don't even know that God exists, how can I have faith in him? If I don't know Christ exists, if I don't know what he did for me, how can I have faith, how can I trust in that work he did for me? It's pretty basic, it involves knowledge. But, obviously, Christian faith requires more than knowledge.

There are many people who know the basics of the gospel, who have heard the gospel many times, and can even articulate the gospel to you. But they don't believe it. Faith involves something else. Faith also involves assent. A history of religions major might know the basic teachings of Christianity, but he doesn't assent to them. He doesn't believe it's actually true. Might be an atheist, might be a Buddhist, might be whatever. It involves assent.

I think we also know that knowledge and assent in themselves are not true saving faith. You can believe something is true, and even assent that, yeah, that really happened. But there's one other element to true saving faith. And that's trust. Trust. Knowledge, assent, and trust. You have to trust the thing.

Great illustration, my favorite illustration for trying to explain what saving faith is, is we call it sitting down faith. That's my attempt at a chair. Looks more like a strange-looking H. But okay, now that's better. Now the legs are not comically long. I warned you about my... I warned some of you about my art skills.

But yeah, a chair. Someone builds me a really nice chair. And I might know something about the way chairs are constructed. I might know what the wood is made of and that the chair exists and that chairs are meant to be sat in. And I might assent intellectually to the fact that, yeah, I think this chair could support my weight. I think, like, based on the dimensions and how it's strengthened, I think it can do that. But trust means sitting in the chair. It means putting your weight on the chair.

That's what true saving faith is. It's not just knowing something about Jesus. It's not just assenting to the fact, yeah, Jesus died, yeah, he rose from the dead. But it's trusting in that fact for your salvation, willing to bet your soul on it, willing to bet your life on it. That is true saving faith. Now, when we talk about saving faith, how faith saves, we have to be very careful about what we mean by that.

Just like with repentance, we need to clarify that faith itself doesn't save anyone. You are not saved by your faith in the sense that your faith merits your salvation. It's not as though God looks at you and says, oh, you know, Becky, she's a sinner.

She deserves my wrath. But you know, she believes in me. She trusts in this work of Christ. And you know, she doesn't have the righteousness thing down, but you know, but her faith's pretty good. So I'll take her faith in place of righteousness. That's not how it works at all. Faith is not a substitute for righteousness. The only substitute for your

righteousness is Christ's righteousness. The only substitute for your life is Christ's life. That is what ultimately saves you. You are saved not by your faith, not by the merit of your faith. You are saved by the merit of Christ. It is Christ who saves you. So where does faith fit in? Faith is the instrument. It is the, it is the, it is how we enter into the union. In the words of Sinclair Ferguson, we believe in to Christ. Faith is how we get in the door.

If I were to illustrate this, it's as if this is a well. Okay, that's a terrible looking well, that's awful. Wow, I am embarrassing myself in all kinds of art-related ways today. Oh, it's supposed to be a well. See what I mean? See what I mean? Okay, all right, it's a well.

W-E-L-L, it's where you draw your water from, all right. No, they are not. My art skills will not save me. Will not save me. Okay, so there's our well. There's our thing there and our bucket going down into it. I'm not gonna attempt to draw the bucket. We'll just have the bucket hidden by the well. All right. Okay, yeah, so we have our well here. And the water in the well is, and you're dying of thirst. And you take the water from the well and you drink it.

You take it in a bucket, right? In some kind of vessel. Does that bucket save you in a sense where the bucket itself, just having the bucket, gets you salvation, gets you water, quenches your thirst? No, the bucket doesn't quench your thirst. Buckets by themselves can't do anything. Buckets are merely a vessel to hold water in. It is the water that saves you. Now could you get the water without the bucket? Not unless you had some other kind of vessel.

That's what we mean when we talk about faith saving. We talk about saving faith. Faith does not save you. Faith is an instrument. It is the vessel in which you take salvation into you. That's what we talk about when we talk about saving faith. And it's for this reason that we say that the relationship with God is objective. Our relationship to God, how we live by faith, is something that is objective, is not subjective. Our experience of faith might be subjective. We have some days we feel like we have more faith than other days.

But in those moments, it's important to remember that it's not the bucket that saves you, it's the water in the bucket. Your relationship with God is objective. It is something that is outside of you. It is something that you have been brought into by faith. You have been brought into Christ.

St. Clair Ferguson, in illustrating this, he talks about the relationship he has with his father. You ask many Christians what your relationship is like with Christ, how a relationship is going. You might say, if you're having a good week, you'll say, you know, I think my relationship with Christ is doing pretty well this week.

I didn't sin as much. I resisted some temptation. I was really in the word. I think my relationship's doing all right. Another week, she might say, it's been a struggle, man. It's been a hard week, a lot of trials, a lot of temptations. I wasn't in the word as much as I wanted to be. It's been tough. That's not really how we talk about, but while there's some truth there, we're not talking about the state of the relationship, we're talking about our experience of the relationship. We talk about our relationship to Christ. We should, St. Clair Ferguson says, you respond to that by saying, I'm in union with him. How's your relationship with Christ going? How's your relationship with Christ? I'm in union with him.

Going back to the illustration of a father, you might ask, how's your relationship with Tim Bernson? He's my dad. He's my dad. That is the objective basis for that subjective enjoyment. There might be some weeks where I enjoy my relationship with my dad more than others.

There might be some weeks where the relationship is difficult, where there's something that comes between us and we need to talk it through. But he never stops being my dad, does he? That part of the relationship remains objective. The state of the relationship remains objective. That's what it's like in Christ. Our relationship with Christ, well, we get into it by faith, and our experience of that relationship might ebb and flow. It is an objective relationship. So we live by faith, and third, we have been crucified with Christ. We've been crucified with Christ. What does it mean here to be crucified with Christ? It seems like sort of an odd statement, being crucified with Christ.

I mean, I don't know about you, I've never been nailed to a piece of wood. What is Paul talking about here? Well, what he's talking, this goes back to that major distinction we talked about earlier, where you are in Adam or in Christ. In Adam or in Christ.

And when you were in Adam, All of Adam's curses belong to you, all of his condition belong to you, and in Christ, all of his condition belongs to you. So, here's the thing. When you are brought into union with Christ, as I said, everything that is His is yours, including your sin. All of your sin is imputed to Christ. All of what you deserve was laid upon him when at Calvary. So that as he died on the cross, as he experienced the wrath of God in a very real sense, if you are in Christ, you experienced the wrath of God. Not in yourself, but in your sin nature, in your old nature, in your old Adam, all that you had merited in the old Adam was laid on Christ. So in a very real sense, legally, you died on that cross with Jesus.

Now, Now, notice a few things about this statement. I have been crucified with Christ. We're gonna do a little bit of gospel grammar here. Gospel grammar. Grammar's important. Again, those of you who are teachers know this. One of my favorite ways of illustrating that is talk about how commas save lives. Commas save lives. You can say, let's eat grandma. Comma there. Let's eat, grandma. Might be a little bit informal, but it's a nice enough statement. It's time to eat. Get the macaroni and cheese, grandma. It's time to eat. Remove the comma, and all of a sudden, we're a cannibalistic tribe. Let's eat, grandma.

Comma, save lives. Grammar is important. It's important to analyze statements and look at the grammar of them, because that's where the meaning is. You get the meaning from the grammar. And so let's look at this statement, I have been crucified with Christ.

The first thing we need to know about this statement is that it's in the past tense. This is something that has happened. It's not something that continues to happen. It's not something that's gonna happen out in the future. It is an established fact. If you are in Christ, this has already happened. Second, it is in the indicative. We talked about gospel indicatives.

It is a statement of fact. Paul is not telling you to do something. There are other places where Paul will say, crucify your old nature, put that old nature to death, put aside your sinful desires. That's not what he's saying here. He's saying this is something that has happened, this is an indicative truth.

You have been crucified with Christ. Notice also it's in the passive voice. This is something that was done to you, not something you did. You were crucified, you have been crucified with Christ. Who did that? God did. Before you were born, before you drew your first breath, before you were even conceived, God had predestined you to enter salvation, and he had laid the guilt of your sin upon his one and only son. So in that moment, your sins were crucified with Christ. You were crucified with Christ. You have been crucified with Christ. This is the state that you have been.

And because you are in that state, because you have been crucified with Christ, that old nature, that sinful nature, that old guilt has no claim on you. Satan can't bring the guilt to your door. You'd say, it's dead and gone. It's already been killed. I have been crucified with Christ. That sin has already met with what it deserves.

It also means that when Satan comes to your door with a temptation, saying, hey, remember that thing that you like doing? Why don't you do that again? Come on. You can say, I've been crucified with Christ. The person that enjoyed that sin, he's dead. He's gone. I have been crucified with Christ and yet I live. Why? Because fourth point, Christ lives in me. Christ lives in me.

This is something that is indicative. It's something that is true of you. It's not something you make happen. It is something that happens when you're saved. Christ lives in you. We've been talking about things that happened outside of you. How union with Christ is about getting into Christ. That's true, and that's the major emphasis. But there is truth, and it is true also that Christ lives in me. Christ lives in you. He comes to live in you.

This is why Paul says elsewhere that you should consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. You are alive to God. That old nature has been crucified with Christ. And how do you live? Because you have received Christ's life. The Adam's life has died. You have received the Christ's life. That life has gotten into you. And because that life is in you, it is at work within you.

That power is at work within you. And that indicative, this statement, Christ lives in me, is what fuels all the imperatives of scripture. Next week, we're gonna talk about the imperatives of the union, but we must remember, we must remember, any imperatives, any time that God says, do this, Christian, that imperative, that command, is grounded in these indicatives, on what is already true of you. The Christian imperative, well, let's begin, the non-Christian imperative, the in-atom imperative, the in-atom imperative of the law, the in-atom command of the law is be what you're not. You're a sinner. You're an atom. You're guilty. Don't be guilty. Don't be a sinner. Stop sinning. And it can't be done. The imperative of Christ, the imperative of one in Christ, is be what you are. You are righteous in Christ, act like it. You are in Christ, live like it. Christ lives in you, live in Christ.

That is the imperative of our union with Christ, and it's grounded in those indicatives. Finally, as we draw to a close here, it's important as we look through all of these statements, I have Christ died for me, live by faith, I have been crucified with Christ, Christ lives in me.

All of these benefits, all of these blessings are really just different ways of talking about Jesus. Being in union with Christ, is not so much about getting things from Christ, getting all these blessings, as though you get Christ in order that you might move on to something else.

You get Christ so you can get that righteousness, so you can move on to sanctification. That's not the way it works. You get in union with Christ to get Christ. He is the prize, and in getting Christ, and in pursuing Christ, in having him more, in experiencing him more, you become more sanctified. In getting Christ, you get righteousness, because Christ is your righteousness. In getting Christ, you get adoption, because Christ is your adoption. In getting Christ, in getting Christ, you get your old nature crucified, because it was crucified in Christ. We never move beyond this, ladies and gentlemen. This is the indicatives of the union.

Any other comments, questions, or concerns? Well, let's close with a word of prayer. Our Father and our God, as we look at these great truths about what is true of us in Christ, the indicatives, Help us, Lord, to apply them to our lives. Help us, Lord, to live like these are true. Help us never to forget. Lord Satan would love to turn these indicatives into imperatives. To say, you don't have enough faith. Work on that. Work on that so you can get righteousness. or help us to remember that these are true, and that these ground the imperative, that these ground the commands. Help us never to forget. In Jesus' name, amen.