



# RAISED WITH CHRIST

ROMANS 6:8-14

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2021**  
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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **Welcome**

Well, good morning! My name is Ethan. I'm one of the pastors of Union Church and I feel really privileged to stand before you and open up the scriptures. I'm humbled and grateful you're here and I'm praying that the preaching of God's word would build us up and shape us as a people today; that you would know a little more the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of Christ that will always surpass our understanding. So to that end, let's pray.

*Glorious God, our hearts beat to worship you, whether we know it or not. The greatest work, the greatest accomplishment, the most satisfying thing we could ever give ourselves to is to adore you. Give us power by your Spirit and help us to worship so that we might forget our sinful desires, lay before your throne our burdens, and experience fullness-of-life in you. Show us Christ and help us to rest in him. Amen.*

### **Sermon Introduction**

Well, this week is the second Sunday in a series we're just calling, "Union with Christ" (As you can tell we're all about the slick, clever titles around here). Believe it or not we didn't choose the name "Union Church" because southeast Michigan is a famous hub for labor unions. The name "Union Church" is rooted in the doctrine of Union with Christ. And that choice didn't come about because we're academic, theology nerds either (though some could accuse us of that and pastor Kyle and I wouldn't have much room to fight you). We wanted our church to be centered on this truth because Union with Christ changes everything. Union with Christ is the foundation of our salvation. Without Union with Christ there is no Christianity.

Pastor Kyle began to unpack the significance of our Union with Christ last week when he taught that if you are a follower of Jesus you have been united to Christ in his death. And because we have died with him we are no longer slaves. Union with Christ means that your guilt has been buried. Your sin has been put to death and so, you are free from your guilt and shame because Jesus died. And if you are a follower of Jesus your sin, your guilt, your shame, your debt to God, your old self that deserves the wrath of God because of your sin- all of this "old you" has been nailed to the cross with Jesus, and died with Jesus, and put in the tomb with Jesus.

And today, we're going to go back to the exact same passage (Romans 6) and see the other side of the same coin. It is not only that your old self was crucified with him. It's not only that the body ruled by sin is done away with so you might no longer be slaves to sin. Christian, you haven't just died with Christ. You've been raised with him. God hasn't simply brought your old self to nothing. He has put something new in you. **Because we are raised with Christ, we have new life in Christ.** And that newness of life is the answer to the longing of our soul.

Now before we get any further, we need to look at the Book. So if you have a bible, you can turn to Romans 6. If you don't have a bible, please go ahead and grab one from the connection station in the back. You'll find Romans 6 in the New Testament, somewhere around the last quarter of the bible.

Romans 6:1-14. I'm going to read the passage and at the end I'll say, "This is the word of the Lord" (because it is) and you will respond, "Thanks be to God" (because we are thankful).

*1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

*5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

*12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

This is the word of the Lord.

[All] Thanks be to God.

### **Why We Need Union with Christ in His Resurrection.**

Now, I already told you where we're heading: **Because we are raised with Christ, we have new life in Christ.** But before we can dig in to this new life we have in Christ, we need to do a bit of work. Because I can talk about being raised with Christ until I'm blue in the face, but if you don't believe you need resurrection I'll miss the mark.

Can I tell you why we are planting Union Church? Almost three years ago, the Lord began to stir us up to plant a new church in Livingston County and initially we had a lot of numbers to drive our decision: there are almost 190,000 people in this county and 60% of them aren't in any way connected to the church. 89% of people in the county aren't connected to a church that would preach from the scriptures, salvation through Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone (and even that number is probably very inflated). If you ever had any doubt about whether or not Livingston County needs one more church I could easily dump a bunch of numbers on you and squash that doubt real quick. We live in a mission field! But then as time went on and we began to put flesh on the bones of this idea, we began to realize something that (for me) is an even deeper motivation than the numbers.

Brighton-Howell, and the greater region is a place of beauty. You drive through our area and you are never far away from a manicured neighborhood, or beautiful green space. Whether your idea of the good life is building your own red-neck kingdom or living on a golf-course you've got both options here. And if you don't have that at home, you can head on over to one of the many comforts and amenities that are right at your fingertips in our area. It is really easy to - through our money, or through our achievement, through our accumulation of stuff, or through our ability to keep busy and entertained - it is really easy to build the illusion of security, and success, and satisfaction. There is a whole lot of outward put-togetherness here... but under the beauty there is real brokenness. The outward signs of security and success and satisfaction are just facades to cover up deep wounds. Among the people sitting over at the Brighton Coffee house, or loading up groceries at Costco, or dropping their kids off at school here at Three Fires there is struggle going on under the surface. And it's true for people sitting in church pews too...

Now I could illustrate that in a lot of ways, but maybe the best way to drive home this observation is just to ask you to think about yourself rather than other people. How are you? Like really, how are you? Are you fulfilled in life? Does the amount of money you have in the bank impact how fulfilled you feel? Does your achievement at your job give you lasting hope? How are your relationships? Any bleeding wounds you'd rather not think about from your spouse or your kids or your friends? How is your physical health? How about your mental health? Is your anxiety level ok? Are your possessions giving you real satisfaction in life? When you lay your head down at night, what are the whispers and worries that netflix has been keeping at bay? And for the person who does feel successful and secure and satisfied, how fragile is that for you? Couldn't it all be turned upside down tomorrow if one key thing was taken away?

We live in a place that has been engineered to lull us into believing that we are living the good life... but when all is said and done, we are still hungry for something more! This life hasn't given us things that really help us change. The good life in Livingston County can't lead us to fulfillment! This is why we are so easily pulled into the next plan for self-improvement, the next product, the next career, the next achievement, the next interesting idea, the next person. We're running from the mess underneath our facade and we're chasing real fulfillment. We're looking for a new way to live!

So if you aren't a follower of Jesus, you need to union with Christ in his resurrection because your life is an exhausting effort toward fulfillment that ends in destruction. In fact the Bible would say that this cycle of looking within and around for the things that will satisfy is just a cycle of death. That you are dead in your sin and the life you're living now is the fruit of your heart that is dead toward God. And the only answer to your deadness is resurrection! And if you are a follower of Jesus, you need to be reminded of your union with Christ in his resurrection because we who are free all too often drift toward living like we are slaves. We all need a new way to live; and Christ offers us resurrection with him that we might we have new life in him.

So I want to spend the rest of our time together with our noses in this passage from Romans, unpacking what it means to be raised with Christ and in case you want to know where we headed from here, I'll give you the outline: **Because we are raised with Christ, we have new life in Christ and that new life looks like (1) New life in place of the Old, (2) A new way to be, and (3) a new way to live.**

## **II. A New Life in Place of The Old**

Let's look back at Romans 6. *1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?* This is the operating question of the passage. Paul has written to the Christians in Rome explaining the gospel; that salvation is received, not achieved. And out of this teaching arises the question: If God is so full of grace for sinners, then why not keep sinning?

Now, that life we just spent a few minutes talking about - the life that is looking for fulfillment outside of Christ, the life that leaves us aching for a new way to live - is really a life of rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created and instead looking to other things for fulfillment. That is the definition of sin. And the gospel calls us out of sin into new life in Christ, but sin always wants to rear up its head and ask, "can't we do both?" Can't I have the grace of Jesus and keep this little bit of my old life outside of Christ? And Paul's answer is, *"2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"* The first offer of the Christian life is to come and die with Christ. Followers of Jesus have been crucified with Christ and buried with him. Our union with Christ in his death frees us from slavery to sin. Praise God for union with him in his death! But if that's all - if all I'm given in Christ is unlocked chains, then I'm up a creek without a paddle.

Imagine that we were slaves and we have been for our whole lives. All we've ever known is to be ruled and oppressed and abused by another. And then all of a sudden one day a king comes and commands that we be set free, then leaves. Well after our joy at being set free died down, we would have a problem: none of us would know what to do with our freedom. We wouldn't have any knowledge of how to use our freedom to provide for ourselves and build our own life. And so it makes sense that even if we were free, we might easily fall back into patterns of obeying those who had oppressed us. It makes sense that we might believe any snake oil salesman who came peddling a new plan or product or person who would show us how to live free. But the beauty of our union with Christ is that the king he hasn't only unlocked our chains. He hasn't only brought our sin to nothing. Just like always with our God, he makes something where there is nothing. Death gives way to life!

Look at verse 4: *“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, **in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**”* King Jesus has not only killed our sin and declared freedom for us, he has taken us by the hand and brought us into his kingdom. He’s replaced our old life with new life. And this is a new life that fundamentally changes who we are. Because we are united to Jesus in his resurrection we aren’t just transactionally given a new life in place of the old; we are given a new way to be.

### **III. A New Way to Be**

Here’s what I mean: Verse 5 reads, *For if we have been **united** with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be **united** with him in a resurrection like his.*

Now that word “united” is really important. In the Greek it has the sense of being grafted into the root. In fact it hearkens back to the words of Jesus in John 15: “I am the vine and you are the branches.” In other words, the gospel isn’t just transactional. It’s transformational. God makes a new person out of you and he does it by grafting you into Jesus. Our life has been inserted into the very roots of his life. We have been united to Jesus Christ. His past is our past. His future is our future. Colossians 3 says, *“For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”* See how we are identified with him? You have died with him. You are raised in him. You are seated at the right hand of God in him.

Tim Keller says it’s like there was a person who, through their own skill and hard work became incredibly wealthy. Now how did riches come to this person? Through their brilliance and effort. But then the rich person gets married. How do their riches go to their spouse? Through their union! That’s what has been done for you in your union to Jesus!

The Father looks at the Son and his heart bursts with delight, and approval, and love. And the text is saying that everything that Christ has done is now how he sees you. He looks at you as free from condemnation for your sins. He looks at you as victorious over the grave. He considers you to be his as Christ is his. This is how Paul can say in Ephesians 1, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing...**” You didn’t just get a “get out of jail free” card. You didn’t just get a pardon. You were united to the sacrificial death and conquering victory of Christ. You are completely identified with him! And because this new life is “hidden with Christ in God” that means it is totally secure. It can never be taken away from you. Your new position as a delighted in, raised to life, son or daughter of God the Father is unbreakable and totally secure. Because who you are in Christ is not dependent on you, it’s dependent on Christ!

In our union with Christ in his resurrection, we are given a new way to be. And it’s that new identity, that new position in Christ that leads to real change. Our new way to be fuels a new way to live.

### **IV. A New Way to Live**

See our new way to be isn't dependent on our behavior. You need to guard yourself from believing that your performance changes your position. This is the security of our Union - it all rests on Christ and what he has done! Performance doesn't impact position, but the opposite is true. Your position in Christ must impact the way you live. And this is the whole thrust of Paul's argument in Romans 6.

Verse 1: Should we remain in our sin so that grace may abound? No way! Verse 4: We've been raised with Christ, so that we may walk in newness of life. Verse 12: *"12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness."*

Paul is saying that through your new identity, you have the ability in the way you live in the world to break the rule of your sinful masters. And he's saying we do that by remembering who we are in Jesus, but considering ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

So friends in Christ, when you fail it is because you are forgetting who you really are. You are like the slaves who continue to obey their oppressors even though the king has set them free. You're not conscious of who you are in Jesus.

There's a story about saint Augustine who, before he was raised to new life in Christ, was incredibly promiscuous. And the story goes that one day after he came to faith one of his mistresses saw him and tried to lure him back into her company. And Augustine says no thank you. And she wonders if he doesn't recognize her, so she says, "Augustine! It's me." and Augustine turns to her and says, "Ah, but it's not me." You used to be someone, but you are someone new in Christ Jesus.

## **V. The Promise of Future Resurrection**

Now I know I can talk about the new way to live and if we're honest in our estimation of ourselves, all this talk about remembering who we are to fight sin can either begin to be incredibly defeating or thrust you into deep doubt. Because you've received Christ, but you haven't seen change in your life. The patterns of your life don't reflect your position in Christ.

Please don't hear me speaking from 30,000 feet up about our Union with Christ in his resurrection and be tricked into believing that this is easy. In this life we will be continually pulled back toward patterns of death and slavery. Walking in newness of life is hard. Counting ourselves alive to God is a continuous battle. Presenting ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life is a life-long process. Even though the king has set us free and given us a new life to live, we are a people who have been whispered to from almost the beginning of the world that surely, if we obey God completely he will abuse us and withhold from us. That's been the lie of the enemy from the beginning. And we are like that oppressed group of people who have been newly set free. Our position as freed people is full and final, but the process of living like freed people will be long and difficult.

This is one of the reasons the church is so vital. Because We're meant to fight this fight together. To spur one another on. They guard one another's back. To care for one another. We're meant to seek patterns of life together because our Union with Christ actually binds us together as believers so that we can get our arms around each other and push one another on to walk in the newness of life even though it's a long and difficult journey.

And as I urge you to press on and fight to walk out your new life in Christ, I also want to lift your gaze to the promise of the gospel. Brother, Sister in Christ: You *have been* raised with Christ - your position in him is immovable. You *are now* raised with Christ - you are called to live out your new life in him every day. And the promise of the gospel is that you *will be* raised with Christ.

**51** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. **53** For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. **54** When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

*"Death is swallowed up in victory."*

**55** "O death, where is your victory?

*O death, where is your sting?"*

**56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**58** Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

(1 Corinthians 15:51-58)