

**TRIUMPHANT LIVING**  
**Union With Christ – Part 3**  
**Taught by Bruce Bickel**  
**May 10, 2013**

Good morning, men. Good to be with you.

***Audience Members:*** *Good morning.*

What Don mentioned is a serious issue in our government; when a Chaplain is not able to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because it'll offend people. It's tragic in our culture that the most offensive words in our vocabulary are the words, "Jesus Christ." Those are the most offensive words in our vocabulary in the English language now, unfortunately. Let's really pray for the Chaplains. I have several friends who are Chaplains and they are in the same situation that Pastor Mitch is. In fact, two of them are up for court martial because they have refused not to not pray in the name of Jesus. It's just a very serious issue. We need to remind ourselves to pray for them.

We get in our own little cocoon right here, and we think everything is just wonderful. We come out here all charged up thinking life is just a bowl of cherries, when really, the battleground is outside the door. We need to be inside the door to be trained—no question—but we need to really up our prayer support because there's a great battle going on out there in the world, and we're a part of that.

I want Don to play a song on the piano called Revive Us Again. Where does revival occur? It occurs inside the church. We talk about revival in America. Yes, we need to have revival in America, but it's going to start inside your church, it's going to start inside my church, it's going to start inside places where those Army, Navy, Air Force Chaplains...that's where revival going to occur. It's going to occur within the body of Christ, and then flows out into the world. Just listen to this song and just meditate upon this idea—revive us again. Don, would you play that?

*[MUSIC]*

The words are "Hallelujah, thine the glory. Hallelujah, amen. Hallelujah, thine the glory. Revive us again." Men, that's got to be a battle cry. Every great war in the history of the world has had a battle cry. In Scotland, it was, "Wallace! Wallace! Wallace!" In World War II, it was "Remember Pearl Harbor!" We have a battle cry, and that is "Thy kingdom come!" That's the rallying cry for the revival that we need to have in the church is, "Thy Kingdom come!"

I'll have to be honest with you today, guys. The reason I'm late—I don't want you to think this is anything super spiritual. I was just praying as I was driving up 79 and just praying for revival in the church, and that's what triggered...I went right by Mt. Nebo road. {LAUGHTER} The next thing I saw was Wexford, two miles. {LAUGHTER}

***Audience Member:*** *If it's any consolation, I've done that before. {LAUGHTER} And I'm a lot younger.*

It was the strangest thing. I don't even remember crossing the bridge. I don't even remember coming across Mt. Nebo. The next thing I saw was Wexford, two miles. That's why I had to send a text message to Sig to say I'm on my way. I was just praying about revival. It was just such a deep, deep sense of need. Don has just really heightened that. Brothers, we need to realize that we're in a huge battle. It's a battle for the souls of men and the glory of God. While we come here, and I'm not belittling what we're

doing here, this is absolutely critical and necessary for our training, but really what happens to us, the value of what we do on Friday mornings is when you step outside that door, what do we do with it. What am I going to do about what I just learned? Men, we're in warfare.

Remember the three words of the Scripture that always teach us the position of God's people? Remnant—it's not everybody. There's a remnant. Persecution—you desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, you will be persecuted. And spiritual warfare. Those are the three things that characterize the church, and that's right in the midst of where we are. That's why it's so critical that we understand what we're learning here about our union with Christ; this wonderful concept of what it means when Jesus said in John 15, "Abide in me. You pitch your tent and feel at home with me, because I'm going to pitch my tent and feel at home with you." I'm going to abide in you. Do we really understand, have we been taught what it means that Jesus is abiding in us? That's what we're talking about when we talk about union with Christ.

Let's go just before the Lord in a moment of silence. Don, would you pray something for us and just set the tone, that the Lord might teach us together today, that we might just say, "Lord, Thy Kingdom come."

*[MUSIC]*

Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit of God. May you be pleased this day to open our eyes that we might behold you more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen!

***Audience Members: Amen!***

We're looking at this wonderful phrase in the Scripture, union with Christ. The concept is a word that describes all the relationships of the uniqueness that we have with the Lord Jesus Christ and all the benefits and blessings that we receive as a result of that union with him and the salvation that he has accomplished for us. We're looking at four concepts. We're looking at, ideally, we'll get to one of these days, the idea of what it means that we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we will be with Christ and we are like Christ.

We'll get to the application of that, but right now, for the moment of several weeks of introduction, we're looking at the nature of this union. The nature of this union with Christ. Primarily, the term is in Christ. Paul uses that phrase 129 times to describe a person who has a saving relationship to God the Father through God the Son. He uses the phrase, "you are in Christ." You'll see other phrases—with Christ. There are some other images that teach us that, and that would be the vine and the branches, a husband and a wife, the building and cornerstone. By contrast, it would be you're in Adam or you're in Christ. There are only two kinds of people. Federally speaking, you have a representative of one branch of society, and that would be those who are in Adam. As a result of that, you receive all the things that are associated with that union of being in Adam. That's Romans 5.

Conversely, we're looking at the other side, the contrast of that is, what it means to be in Christ. Federally, we have a representative who is our head, and as a result of that, he is a representative of all of those of us who are in Christ in this union, and therefore we receive all the blessings and all the benefits of this wonderful union called being in Christ.

We're looking at the nature of the union of what this means. We saw last week that it's a spiritual union (1 Corinthians 6:17 and 1 Corinthians 12:13). We saw last week that it's also a mystical union.

There's something mysterious about this, and we need to let it be. You probably can't explain this well. One of the best ways of the illustration to use it is Ephesians 5. It's similar to the comparison of a union between a husband and a wife. There's something mysterious about that. There's something mystic about that. This is a mystical union. Not only is it a spiritual union, but it's a union that is quite unknown by the world, and it's unexplained by the world. They can't really explain it. If you're not in Christ, you're not going to understand what we're talking about, because it is something that is unique to the body of Christ.

There's also some other indications of this union, and that would be it's a vital union. Not only is it a spiritual union, a mystical union, but it's a vital union. What I mean by that is, the spiritual life is drawn directly from the Lord Jesus Christ himself through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It's a vital union. Go to such verses as John 14:19-20, ". <sup>19</sup>After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also." There's where we see this is a vital union. Our life really is in Christ, and he is the source of all the life that we have because of this union. "<sup>20</sup>In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." That's critical for us to understand that union. This is a vital union where we draw all the resources of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, we now have a life that has its vital resources come from the life of God.

Essentially that's what Jesus was teaching his disciples at the Beatitudes, at the preamble to the Sermon on the Mount, when he said, "Blessed are you." He was describing, he was basically saying, "Here is the way in which you live your life because happiness comes from happenings. Blessedness comes from managing happenings with grace." That's the difference between joy and happenings. When we say, "I want to be happy," those are contingent upon circumstances, upon happenings around us.

Blessedness, which is happiness in spite of circumstances, the Greek word "makarios," means blessed in spite of circumstances, means you manage the happenings, the circumstances, with grace. That's why you and I are blessed. What we say is that's because we have to realize as Jesus taught us in the Beatitudes, we don't have the resources to live the Christian life. Christ is the resource. It is his life through us. "I'm in the Father, you are in Me, and I am in You," he tells us in John 14. You've got to realize you and I should never have a lack of resources because if we have a lack of resources it's because we're trusting our own and not Christ. You see, what he's says is this union in Christ is he's the life source of everything that we are. We do that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

I was talking with the friend of mine the other day who just had a heart transplant. It's been about six months. He's a strong believer. He gave me one of the best illustrations that I want to share with you. He said, "Bruce, you know, my physical heart transplant is just like my regeneration. When they took out my heart that was diseased and they put in a new heart, that's the same thing we see in Ezekiel 36, 'I'll take your heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh.' When they did that, two things they told me, 'You have a new heart, but you're an infected body. You're going to have to fight off the infection that surrounds this new heart. Two things you're going to have to do. You're going to have to take these drugs, these medications, to fight off the infection because your new heart is in an infected environment, called your body.'" Brothers, when God gives you a new heart, you are in an infected environment called the world, the system of this world. You and I have to fight off the infection of this world. The second thing he said you have to do because of my heart transplant, is you have to take anti-rejection drugs because my body is going to want to reject the new heart. He said, "Two things I have to do is take medications to deal with the infection and take anti-rejection medication."

The Holy Spirit is our anti-rejection drug. You see, that's what we do. This is a vital union, where we are now fighting, we have a new heart, that's regeneration. God calls us to himself. He cleanses us from ourselves. He creates a new heart within us. He creates a new life within us. He completes us with a new power source, and he causes us to be obedient. That's Ezekiel 36. We've talked about that many times.

Just because you and I have a new, regenerated heart does not mean that we're perfect. You and I do not live life by being perfect. We live life by being forgiven. That's how you and I live our life. We live our life by being forgiven, not by being perfect. You and I have to fight the system of this world and the infection of this world's system. How is the world going to tend to affect our new regenerated heart? It's through our senses. It's through our senses.

Go to Acts 2, you'll notice there, at the coming of the Holy Spirit...there are five significant events in the Messiah's life—his birth (his incarnation), his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and now the entrance of the Holy Spirit. Those are the five major events in the life of Christ that affect us in our union with him. It's his birth, it's his death (his crucifixion), his resurrection, his ascension, and now the entrance of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 2, we're told that two things occurred that got people's attention before Peter stood up and gave his wonderful sermon in Acts 2, and that was this; that there was wind and there was flames of fire. Notice how God in his providence appealed to the masses. He did that through their senses. It was the sense of sound (the wind) and it was the sense of sight (the flames of fire). That's what got their attention to say, "What's going on?" Some people said, "Oh, they're drunk." Peter says, "No, let me explain what happened." But you see, their attention was gotten through the senses.

Brothers, we need to realize this; that the infectious environment in which you and I to have to fight off and anti-reject these things of the world's system comes through our senses. It's through our eyes, it's through our smell, it's through our taste, it's through our touch and it's through our hearing. That's where we are infected. That's where you have to fight. You have to take seriously what you listen to. You have to take seriously what you see. You have to take seriously what you touch. You have to take seriously what you smell. And you have to take seriously what you eat. You see, the system of this world is going to try to infect our regenerated heart, and we have the anti-rejection drug, it's called the Holy Spirit, which comes in and we live a life by faith because this is a vital, life-giving union that we have with the person and work of Christ. We're not left alone.

This union we have with Christ is this, "I am in you, and I'm in the Father, and you're in me and I'm in you." You see, that's a vital union. It's not just something that is spiritually out there like the mystics would say—you enter Nirvana because you're now united with the divine essence. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about a life-giving source of the person and work of Christ living his life in you. It's vital. You and I need to understand that he is the resource.

Just an illustration. You and I should never run out of mercy, among other things. Jesus says in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall..." be violated. It doesn't say that. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." Brothers, if you want somebody to treat mercifully, what do you do? Give them mercy, because you never run out of that because Christ is the source. Now sometimes, sometimes, in dealing with the infectious things of the world trying to infect our hearts, our new regenerated hearts, sometimes you come to the realization and say, "Lord, I just don't have it. I don't have the love that I need to have right now for her. I just don't have it. I don't feel like it. I don't want to do it. I don't have it." That's when you say, "Lord, you've got to be the love for me because I don't have

the resources. Lord, you've got to be my mercy. I don't have...I don't want to be merciful to that person. Look what they've done to me. I mean, they stab me in the back over and over and over again. When is somebody going to defend me?" You see, that's natural. But we need to understand in this union with Christ, we have the living, vital resources of the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit who is our source of everything. At that moment we say, "Lord, you've got to be my mercy for me. I don't have what it takes. Will you be my mercy?" you see, that's what this vital life is about. We've got all the resources we'll ever need.

Look at 2 Peter 1. I've referred to this many times. <sup>2</sup>"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; <sup>3</sup>seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything..." (2 Peter 1:2-3) Now that's the vital, life union relationship we have with Christ. He's given us "everything pertaining to life and godliness." The word life there is a Greek word which means quality of life, not time of life, but quality. God gives us, in this union with Christ everything that you and I will ever need to live our life at the highest quality.

You and I are going to have to fight off the infection of the world. We're going to have to fight off the anti-rejection things of the system of this world trying to reject the new heart. Those are our responsibilities. Obedience is a love response that we give to God because we understand this union. But notice, "given us everything pertaining to life and godliness." The word godliness there is a word that means worship rightly directed. It means you know how to worship God correctly.

Friends, I just wish we would take seriously our style of worship. Do we really worship God correctly? Or have we just done it as something to appeal to the masses because it's what they want? You see, we've been given all the resources. The degree to which you and I understand our union with Christ and this vital union...yes, it's a spiritual union, yes it's a mystic union, but it's also a vital union. The more that you and I understand this union with Christ, it's going to affect the way we worship because it's going to be an expression of gratitude.

"Through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." (2 Peter 1:3b) You see, brothers, in this vital union, you and I have been given everything, all the resources we need. It doesn't mean that you're going to live a life perfectly. I'm not saying that. Remember this—we don't live life by being perfect. We live life by being forgiven. That's where it begins. Lord, have mercy on me the sinner. It's the most powerful prayer I could ever pray. Lord, have mercy on me the sinner.

**Tom:** *It's not an automatic life either, because it says through our knowledge of him.*

Yes.

**Tom:** *Our knowledge of him comes through prayer and the Word.*

Amen.

**Tom:** *We have to be every day in that.*

This vital union is a result of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Look at John 17:22-23. He's talking about our future glory, which is right now apparent and it's operational right now. This is the Lord's Prayer the night before he was betrayed, beginning at verse 22, <sup>22</sup>"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; <sup>23</sup>I in them and You in Me, that they may be

perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

You see, there’s a sense of our oneness in this vital union with Christ that there’s a sense that there’s one body. Do you realize that the world has the [UNCLEAR] at that verse? The world has a right to reject the deity of Christ when they disunity in the church. Do you realize that? They have a right to reject the fact that Jesus is God when they see Christians fighting each other. Look at this, “<sup>22</sup>The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; <sup>23</sup>I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity.” Now notice this—cause and effect—“so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

Brothers, we need to take seriously our relationships with each other in this vital union with Christ. It doesn’t mean that we’re all going to do the same thing. I’m not saying that. You know, we have feet and we have arms and we have legs and we have heads and we have ears and we have mouths. We’re all going to be different. But it’s one body. We need to understand the significance of the union that we have in Christ and its impact upon the world. It doesn’t mean that everybody’s going to do the same thing. There’s going distinctiveness between different expressions of Christianity. The real issue is, is it biblically based?

There’s one way in which we need to understand how this works, this vital union, and that is through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is, in this illustration of the heart transplant, is our anti-rejection drug. If I can use that crassly, it’s our anti-rejection drug. Let me show you how that works. Go to Ephesians 5:18, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” A far more accurate translation of that word “be filled” from the original text would be this—be being kept filled. Be being kept filled. In other words, there’s some event that’s occurred in your past where you were filled. This is not talking about a second blessing. This is not something that happens after your conversion. It’s saying there’s an event in your life that occurred when you were filled with the Holy Spirit. That is when you were converted. That is at your regeneration. You cannot be a believer without the ministry of the Holy Spirit regenerating your heart. That’s where it happens.

That’s when you were filled with the Spirit. Now our responsibility is to keep myself in a position of always daily be being kept filled. It’s something that’s happening all the time. There are multiple fillings. It’s every day. My responsibility is to be being kept filled. This is not a second blessing that says after your conversion you’re now filled with the Spirit. This occurs at your conversion. It occurs at your regeneration. You are filled with the Spirit, you’re brought into the body of Christ, and now that is that vital union that you have with Christ.

Our responsibility, then, is what do I do to keep myself in a position of be being kept filled? Hold your finger on Ephesians 5:18 and go to Colossians 3:16. Look back to Ephesians 5:18. Let’s read the rest of that, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” Now here’s evidence of being filled with the Spirit, “<sup>19</sup>speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; <sup>20</sup>always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.” (Ephesians 5:19-20) You see, one of the evidences is gratitude, thanksgiving. Notice, there are four things that are evidences of the working of the Holy Spirit. Speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs—that’s worship—singing and making melody in your heart with the lord giving thanks.

Now go to Colossians 3:16. Notice this. Start with verse 15 of chapter 3 of Colossians, “<sup>15</sup>Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the

word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” Notice the consequences, brothers, of this, letting the Word of God dwell in you richly are the same consequences of being kept filled by the Holy Spirit. How is it that you and I be being kept filled on a daily basis? It is how?

***Audience Members: Read the Word of God.***

Read the Word. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly. It produces the same thing because the Holy Spirit is the Paraclete, the one who comes along and teaches us. That’s a part of our vital union with Christ. Do you see how that works? The degree to which you and I let the Word of God dwell in us richly will be the degree to which you and I will be being kept filled. One of the expressions of that is gratitude. Just thanksgiving. Gratitude is much more attractive than griping.

How many times do we hear people gripe in the church? The sermon was too long. It was too deep. He doesn’t tell enough stories. I don’t like the music. It’s too loud. It’s too traditional. Why don’t we get some jazzy stuff? You have people complaining all the time about it. We need to get over that. Get a life. If you understand this union with Christ, it’s going to infect our attitudes because he is the life source of everything that we have. “I’m in you. You’re in me. I’m in the Father. The Father is in you.” There’s our source of life. You’ve been given everything you need for two things—to live life at its highest quality and to worship God correctly.

You see, men, that’s the vital union that we have Christ. It impacts everything that we do. So yes, it’s a spiritual union, yes, it’s a mystic union, but it’s also a vital union of life-giving source.

Go to Galatians 2:20. Now notice, where’s your life, brothers? Listen to this. This is who you are. This is what God is saying about you because of this union with Christ, this vital union that we have of being in Christ. “<sup>20</sup>I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” What’s the source of your life, brothers? It’s the life of Christ. It’s this vital union.

Notice, “I live by faith in the Son of God.” Now the word faith is the word believe. Believe means four things—depend upon, adhere to, rely upon and trust in (DART). It means I’m living my life by depending upon the Son of God, I’m adhering to, in my life, to the Son of God, I’m relying upon the Son of God, and I’m trusting in the Son of God. The word believe here does not mean give mental assent. It doesn’t mean that you just sit back on your haunches and believe in Jesus. The word believe in the Greek is a very, very aggressive word. It’s a passive word in the English language, “Oh, you believe.” Even the demons believe.

Some people have what I would call a demonic faith. They just believe in Jesus as a person, but they’re not DARTing. They’re not depending upon, adhering to, relying upon or trusting in. You see, that’s the source of your life. That’s the ministry of the Holy Spirit in us.

Brothers, be being kept filled. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly, and watch what happens with this life-giving force of the vital life of Christ is part of our union. It’s also a vital union.

It’s also a very personal union. It’s a spiritual union, it’s a mystical union, it’s a vital union, but it’s also a personal union. Everyone, separately, is in union with Christ.

Some of the liberal theologians teach that you have no direct union with our Lord and only have union through the church. The church is the administrator of grace. They're going to say that you can only have union with Christ through the church. We derive our life, not through the church, we derive our life from the Lord because of this personal union. It is a very personal union that you have personally with the Lord Jesus because when he was on the cross, you were on his mind. That's where it all starts. This union with Christ all starts in the loving doctrine of election in eternity past. That's where it starts.

By name, you were called before the foundation of the world we're told in Ephesians. You see, it's a very personal union. We are not born of the church, but we're born of the Spirit. As a result, we're a member of a mystical church. This is a very, very personal union. It's a relationship that you have, personally. We flippantly say, "Do you have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?" You notice how flippantly we say that? We just flip it around like that. There's something significant to that, brothers, when you understand what we've talked about so far in this union. This personal relationship is something that is absolutely critical to our understanding. But it is not something that we flippantly say, "Have you invited Jesus into your life to have a personal relationship with the Savior?" It's far more than that. You see, we don't take time to explain what it means to people. We're just looking for the result, when really, we need to look for the regeneration in that person's life. It's a very personal union.

I'd say it's an organic union. It's an organic union. By that I mean it suggests a union in which we give and we receive. It's an organic union. We give and we take. Look at Ephesians 4:15-16, "<sup>14</sup>As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup>but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, <sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

You see, in this organic relationship, there's a lot of giving and there's a lot of taking. In other words, that means I have a lot to give to you, but you've got a lot to give to me. You've got to be receptive to what other people give to you. You don't have to be the answer person. You see, that's the joy of fellowship. That's the joy of our Friday time together, our Brave Men study. There's so much that we can give to each other. This is not about one person teaching. It's about our teaching and letting the Word of God dwell in us richly so that we can be being kept filled and really give to one another. Our ministry is who we are where we are. In this organic union, there's a lot you can give to each other.

**Don:** *You said a couple of minutes ago that we're not born of the church, we're born of the Holy Spirit, but at the same time, in order to grow, in order for us to grow, the church is vital. [UNCLEAR]...*

Absolutely. That's why this is an organic relationship. That's why I wanted to talk about this next to help us understand that, yes, it's very personal, but it's very organic. What I mean by organic, I'm talking about the church. It's critical that we are involved in the local church. One of the great things...let's see how many different churches we have here. At one time, I think we did quick survey and we had 17 different churches represented. That's wonderful. The question is are we causing revival to occur in my own church fellowship? What am I doing about I'm learning? Don's absolutely right. This is an organic relationship. That means within the church, some people are going to be preachers, some people are going to be teachers, some people have the gift of helps, some people have the gift of administration. What we need to realize is we need to let people exercise their gifts just as we need to exercise our gifts because this union is an organic union where that's give and there's take. It's by design. It's called to local church. It's called the universal church. It's one body, where Christ is the head. The feet need the hands. The hands need the legs. The legs need the arms. The arms need the head. You see, we



need each other. That's the organic relationship we have through the church. The church is vital to our expression and manifestation and development of this organic union with Christ that we have.

Now last, I would say this. In summary, it's a spiritual union, it's a mystical union, it's a vital union, it's an organic union, it's a personal union. Then lastly, I would say this—it's an indissoluble union. Indissoluble. In other words, it's perpetual. It just goes on forever. You're not in and out of grace. You're not in and out of this union. Go to Romans 8. Romans 8 starts with this, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are..."?

***Audience Members:*** *In Christ Jesus.*

You see that guys? That's the union we've been talking about. That's all this stuff we've been talking about. This vital union, this organic union, this mystical union, this personal union, this spiritual union. It's all summed up in that little word "in Christ." There's no condemnation. Now that doesn't mean that you and I are not worthy of condemnation. Yes, we are. We just don't get it because of what Christ has accomplished. Because you're in union with Christ. The reason you're not condemned is not because of anything you've done; it's because of everything that he's done. You're now in Christ. The non-condemnation attitude and environment is because of what he's accomplished. WHJD—What has Jesus done? He's accomplished that, and you are now in union with him. "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

Now go down to the latter part of chapter 8. Chapter 8 starts with no condemnation. The latter part of chapter 8 ends with no separation. <sup>37</sup>"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39)

You see, it starts with no condemnation, and it ends with no separation. Why is that possible? Go to Romans 8:33, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" Who's going to condemn you? No one. "God is the one who justifies." You've been given sinless perfection and perfect obedience credit because of the accomplishments of the person and work of Christ. You've been justified by faith. "Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." (Romans 8:34)

Brothers, a quick summary of Romans 8. It starts with no condemnation; it ends with no separation, and the reason is because of Christ's intercession. Do you know what Jesus is doing at this very moment? He's at the right hand of the Father saying, "Father, those men are ours. When I was on the cross, I knew them by name. Father, I'm in them, you are in me, they are in us. On their behalf, Father, help them understand this union, what it means. It's no condemnation. It's not separation," because Christ is interceding, the representative we have right now at the right hand of God the Father. We don't understand enough the intercessory work that Christ has going on for us right, progressive tense and for eternity. That's why this is an indissoluble union.

Let me read something, much to the chagrin of Ted Wood. I'm going to read from a Baptist. {LAUGHTER} This is from Charles Spurgeon.

***Ted:*** *He's okay.*

Ted said he's okay. {LAUGHTER} Here's what Charles Spurgeon says about this indissoluble union, of what it means to be in Christ "Jude said we are preserved in Christ Jesus. There is a close union between Christ and us, for we are in him. Because of this union, we are eternally preserved." Indissoluble union. Look, "As it is impossible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled and kneaded together, so Christ and a believer. Then they are united together, there is no parting them anymore, and while lasts, the other must endure." It's an indissoluble union. "This is indeed the sure ground of the final preservation of the saints. The union with the Lord is an indissoluble nature so that the Apostle Paul acquires, who shall separate us? It is as the union of the body with the head, which cannot be sundered without death to the both. Because I live, you shall also live, is our guarantee of eternal life. What more do you require? If Christ be in us, and we in him, the union is of the most intense kind and the security which follows from it is of the most certain sort. He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. What closer and more abiding union can be imagined than being in Christ?"

Just let me close with that and let's pray. Father, give us a clear understanding of what it means to be in Christ in this union, and let there be no doubt as to my union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Would your Holy Spirit cause our fellowship to be so constant and so sweet that the oneness of our souls with each other to the sacred person of the Lord Jesus Christ may be most evident. Father, so shall we be with thee and you with us that we will be together forever, and may it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen!