

**TRIUMPHANT LIVING**  
**Taught by Bruce Bickel**  
**Session: Union with Christ – Part 7**  
**June 14, 2013**

Good morning, men. Good to be with you.

**AUDIENCE:** *Good morning.*

Let's go quietly before the Lord, know that He is God, and prepare our hearts for what He might have for us this morning.

[MUSIC]

Gracious and merciful Heavenly Father help us to never take for granted the freedoms that we have. People have sacrificed their own lives that we might be meeting on a Friday here in The Barn, and may we never take that for granted. Give us a grateful heart Father for the blessings that You have bestowed upon us and may we be responsible in knowing and doing what we are supposed to do with that responsibility, but Father most of all we just pray that You would cleanse us of all of our unrighteousness and that You would prepare our hearts to receive that which Your Holy Spirit would descend upon us and teach us this day. May He fulfill His job description of guiding us into all truth and may it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen.

We are continuing our study on Union **with** Christ and what it means to be **in** Christ, looking at the four major Biblical themes of that concept: we are **in** Christ; Christ is **in** us; we are **like** Christ; and we will be **with** Christ. We want to wrap up today with what it means that we are **in** Christ and begin to touch on what it means that Christ is **in** us during our lifetime. If you would pull out your notes, which would be Lesson No. 5, and we are still following that outline. We began last week talking about we are **in** Christ and what that means during our lifetime.

We want to begin this morning about what it means to have new life in Christ. At every stage of the application of redemption is given us because we are **in** Christ. Now **in** Christ is the phrase that Paul uses over 129 times to describe a person who has a saving relationship with God the Father through God the Son. As you have heard me say on numerous times, he doesn't use the word Christian per se that is generally used to describe a group of people, but when he talks about an individual relationship to Christ, he says you are **in** Christ, **with** Christ, **of** Christ and some of those prepositional descriptions he uses about 129 times.

We have been examining what it means in reality when we discover what it means to be **in** Christ. That is what we are discussing when we are talking about this concept of union **with** Christ. One of the concepts is we are **in** Christ and we have new life **in** Christ. I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 2:10 because every stage of the application of redemption is given to us...the benefits, the responsibilities are given to us because we are **in** Christ. It is not because of anything we have done, it is because God views us as being **in** Christ.

Now the word "redemption" means rescued through the payment of a price. Rescued through the payment of a price. If anybody ever asks you what is the main theme of the Bible, a very good answer would be the theme of

redemption, which is from Genesis to Revelation...the one theme is the redemptive work of the personal work of Jesus Christ; and redemption means rescued through the payment of a price. That's the whole theme of the Scripture.

All the applications of our redemption are applied to us because we are found **in** Christ. That means that God views us differently. God does not look at us the way we look at ourselves. He always looks at us as being **in** Christ. Part of that means that when we are **in** Christ, we have a new life in Christ; it is not the old life that we have been living because we are now living a new life **in** Christ.

Ephesians 2:10. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus..." (there is your phrase and notice how are you created? You are created **in** Christ Jesus) "...for good works..."

Notice there is a little distinction here. The good works are not created, you are created...we are created **in** Christ Jesus and the result of that is, it manifests itself in good works. Now certainly God has ordained those good works but the whole concept is that the reason He has ordained those good works for you specifically is that you have been created **in** Christ Jesus. Do you see that phrase? That is the critical issue. You have been created to live a new life **in** Christ Jesus, and because of that, there is an expression of that new life **in** Christ Jesus that manifests itself in good works.

Remember we talked about good works before. Biblically a good work is defined by three things: (1) it is according to the Scripture; (2) it is done by faith; and (3) it is done with the right motive. Now that is what constitutes a Biblically acceptable good work. We have used the phrase "the best a non-believer can do is a good/bad work" and our works are always going to be bad because they are tainted; but the realization is this: you have been created in new life **in** Christ Jesus and the result of that new creation is you have been recreated **in** Christ Jesus and you are His workmanship. You are an individual workmanship of Christ that manifests itself in good works. That is why we will talk in a couple of weeks about being **like** Christ. How does that manifest itself? Our good works is a description or a demonstration of the fact that we are living a life **humanly like** Christ, not divinely like Him, but our life manifests certain characteristics of His humanity at the human level where we manifest those in things called good works.

A good work must be defined by the Scripture, it is done by faith in the personal work of Christ, and it is done with the right motive of the glory of God. That is what we are created for. So part of our new life **in** Christ is that you have been created for good works. What God has ordained, the Holy Spirit applies and the Son accomplishes. The Father ordains it, The Son accomplishes it, and the Holy Spirit applies it. You have been created for good works. Notice this phrase again: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." The word "walk" means the direction of your life.

Sometimes you do not know what a good work is until it's over and you look back and you say that is one of those things that I was created **in** Christ Jesus that God ordained before hand and that I could do right now. Sometimes you don't even discover that good work until it's over and you look backwards and you see that it is something that God created, I could not have done that in myself. But the important thing and this is one of the expressions of our new life **in** Christ, is that you are a new creation. Go to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17.

When you are **in** Christ, you are a new creation. There is a new life **in** Christ and all the benefits of the redemptive work of Christ have been applied to you because you have been created **in** Christ Jesus.

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17. “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

See that phrase again? “...if anyone is in Christ,” That is a description of a follower of Christ, it is a description of a disciple. He doesn’t use the word “Christian” per se. In Acts 11, the word “Christian” is used to describe the people, a group of people, at the Church of Antioch, but here Paul uses this phrase “in Christ” again to say specifically you have been created **in** Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared before hand and the reason is this: “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away, behold, new things have come.” That is the new life we have **in** Christ; and all the applications and benefits of redemption are applied to you and to me because we are **in** Christ. That means our regeneration is applied to us. Also, our justification.

Go to Romans 5. We’ve touched on this before but this is such a critical passage. To understand the doctrine of salvation, read the Book of Romans, specifically 5, 6, 7 and 8. One of the other blessings of our redemptive work of Christ being created **in** Christ Jesus and new life **in** Christ is the whole concept of justification.

Romans 5:1. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ...” Justification is God’s declaration that you are righteous. In other words, it means that He views you radically different than He did. And when you read the rest of the Book of Romans, you are going to see that there are two kinds of people: those who are in Adam as our federal head; and those who are **in** Christ.

Romans 5:15-16. “But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one” (that would be Adam) “the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like that which came through the one” (that would be Adam) “who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.”

Justification is God’s declaration that you are righteous. That is how God views you. God does not view you as being in Adam. He views you as being **in** Christ because you have new life **in** Christ. You have been created **in** Christ Jesus for good works.

Romans 5:17. “For the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

When you are justified by faith alone, God gives you credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. That is how He views you; in other words, the description of the Old Testament would be you are wrapped in the robes of righteousness. God views you as being wrapped in the robes of Christ’s righteousness. When you sin, that sin has been paid for—this does not give us license now, so don’t be sloppy and carry this too far—what that ought to do is recognize that God does not view my sin but He views me **in** Christ because that has been paid for as I have been declared righteous. That is why your sanctification is not something that you **achieve** but that it is something that you **receive**. You are sanctified. You express your sanctification by your obedience but your obedience does not achieve your sanctification. Christ is our sanctification. You are sanctified. You have been set apart to be Holy as we just saw in Ephesians 2:10, you have been created **in**

Christ Jesus for good works. That is part of your sanctification. You express that...you express your sanctification; but you are sanctified. You have been justified, you are sanctified, and you will be glorified when the Lord returns in all of His glory and we reside with Him in eternity. But the expression of our sanctification is “I just lived out in gratitude that which I have received because of my being recreated **in** Christ Jesus.” This is all part of the concept when Paul says that you have been created **in** Christ.

Notice some of the benefits of justification in Romans 5:1. The first is that we have peace **with** God through our Lord Jesus Christ through Whom we have access to God. As an introduction, the New American Standard says, access by God into the grace in which we stand and results for the hope of the glory of God; and that hope leads into confidence and that confidence leads into the love. There are five benefits right there in the first 3 or 4 verses of Romans 5, the benefits of our justification because you have been recreated **in** Christ Jesus and here they are:

- (1) You have peace **with** God.
- (2) You have **access** to God.
- (3) You have **hope** in God.
- (4) You have **confidence** in God.
- (5) You **experience the love** of God.

Those are all the results of your being recreated **in** Christ Jesus. Let me give you those again because it is critical that you understand it. These are the blessings that come to you and me because of our new creation **in** Christ, for which you have been recreated **in** Christ Jesus for good works. These blessings in the first several verses of Romans 5 are:

You have peace **with** God and that is different than the peace **of** God. You cannot have the **peace of God** until you have **peace with** God. Understanding that you have peace **with** God infers that you were once an enemy but now you have **peace**. You were once an enemy, look at Romans 5:10. “If while we were enemies God saved us... .” So at one time you were His enemy, you were in Adam. The first thing we have is, we have peace **with** God and that means we have **access** to God. The only way you can have access to God is if God changes His view of you. That is what justification does. God changes His view of you and now you have access to Him. If you are in Adam, you do not have access to Him. You don’t have access to Him if you are in Adam. The only people who have access to Him are those who are **in** Christ. That is the new life **in** Christ. That is the union **with** Christ that we are talking about. So, you have peace **with** God, then you have **access** to God, then you have the **hope** of God, then you have **confidence** in God. Why do you have confidence in God? Because you have hope. The word “hope” does not mean wishful thinking; it means confident expectation that it will occur. The reason you have confident expectation is that something will occur at the hand of God and because you have peace with God, you have access to God, and the next thing is: I have the hope—I have the confident expectation that it will occur because I have access to God, because I have peace with God. Everything starts with how God views us and He now views you as having peace with Himself and you are not treated as an enemy of Him. As a result of that hope, you have confidence and the confidence then leads to an understanding of God’s love. In the next verses after that, He describes His magnificent love for us.

So those are all part of the blessings of our having been recreated **in** Christ Jesus.

Yes, Brian?

**BRIAN:** *Are you going to talk a little bit more about sanctification?*

No. {LAUGHTER}.

**BRIAN:** *What is the difference between sanctification and maturity? What I'm hearing you say is that... sanctification, you have already been sanctified; but where does the maturity process come in? I always [UNCLEAR].*

OK. Let's take a look at the pilgrimage of a believer that has been created **in** Christ Jesus.

You start with **justification** and that is freedom from the **penalty** of sin because God now declares you as righteousness.

Next you have **sanctification**, which is freedom from the **power** of sin.

Christ is our sanctification. Look at 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:30. He is our sanctification, He is our wisdom, He is our righteousness, He is our Holiness, and He is our sanctification. So in that sense, because you have been justified, God has declared you as sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient and that means you have been set apart to be free to live a life, not according to the power of sin, but of the power of the Holy Spirit. You have been sanctified and set apart. The best example would be the items in the Temple or Tabernacle in the Old Testament. They didn't do anything other than they were chosen for a specific purpose, they were sanctified because they fulfilled a certain specific purpose. You and I have been chosen to fulfill a certain specific purpose in the temple of God's Kingdom, if you would. So we have been set apart because we are sanctified. That means you have been set apart to be Holy. To the degree which you express that, that will be your maturity. The degree to which you express that is your maturity, but you don't achieve your sanctification by being mature, you express your sanctification by maturity. You don't achieve it.

So the expression of maturity is more of Christ and less of me. We need to understand that you and I do not become more spiritual. Spirituality is an absolute that is defined by the personal work of Christ. We talk about Tom Cruise being spiritual and Oprah Winfrey...they're spiritual because they seem to be decent people or whatever they do. You see, we have relegated the word "spirituality" to be anything that [UNCLEAR] or anything that is decent. That is not it at all. Spirituality is defined, guys, by the person and work of Christ—sinless perfection and perfect obedience. That is what is truly spiritual. You and I do not become more spiritual, you and I become more mature. That is, we begin to express with more maturity our sanctification. Maturity does not achieve your sanctification. Maturity is an expression of your sanctification because you are already sanctified and set apart to be Holy. We just saw that in Ephesians 2:10. You have been created **in** Christ Jesus for good works. That is part of your sanctification, to express that. Maturity is...how much do I express my sanctification that I have been set apart for Holiness?

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *I just want to read a verse...before Brian asked that question I was thinking the same thing about sanctification being a process. What you said, we are sanctified through Christ, and that being...that right there is [UNCLEAR] a process. In 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:23 it says, "May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through, may your whole spirit, soul and body, be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who called you as faithful and He will do it."*

Yes. 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:23? Yes, that is a good verse...they are all good verses. {LAUGHTER}

The point of this is, sanctification is something that God does to you. He does that. You are sanctified. What you and I do now is that we express that. That is why we use that verse Ephesians 2:10. That is one of the ways in which you demonstrate being sanctified...through your good works. That is an expression of that and the more you do that the more mature we become, which is more of Christ and less of me. But I don't become more spiritual in that sense. I am **in** Christ and you are **in** Christ and to that degree, we become more spiritual but that is not something that I achieve because that is something that breeds a sense of humility. Humility is this: seeing that which is perfect and realizing I cannot achieve it. That is what humility is. I see that which is perfect, I see the sinless perfection and perfect obedience in Christ. I realize I cannot achieve that. So I don't try to achieve that, I **receive** that through the work of justification regeneration and then that is part of my sanctification: I receive Who He is, I just now begin to express that more maturely and that is where we get into the disciplines of the Word of God dwelling in us richly, our worship, all of the experiences, putting ourselves in a position to receive grace, the Friday men's study where we are learning as God teaches through the ministry of the Holy Spirit...those are ways in which we become more mature and begin to express that sanctification.

Yes.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *I guess I'm a bit confused... 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:3 says that we have been given everything to live a Godly life and to see that sanctification...the way you're describing it. But as you go along and it talks about all these different things, verse 9 says, "For whoever lacks these qualities is near-sighted as he is blind and having forgotten [UNCLEAR] from his former sins... ." So it almost seems like it is a difficult stand and I think of all the different times when Paul talks about "I fought with my body [UNCLEAR] not an neither/nor but a false man; so we are absolutely sanctified in Christ [UNCLEAR] and I'm just trying to figure this out.*

All the resources, that's grace. Well, you just figured it out. It's a [UNCLEAR]. You just answered your own question. Next? {LAUGHTER}. Yes, but you just did.

Bishop? Please help us.

**BISHOP RODGERS:** *Some theologians describe your position...positional sanctification...that then leads to transformational...*

There you go, that's a good expression. See, positionally you are sanctified but transformationally you have not begun to express it, which is 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1. You have a responsibility. Let's go to 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1.

This is one of the best passages on my human responsibility. I have a responsibility to express my sanctification because I am what? I am **in** Christ. You have a responsibility. This is not something that God does for you and you sit back on your haunches and do nothing. You have an absolute responsibility to work on these things and that is why Paul says, "I buffet my body, I run the race." He gives all kind of descriptive verbs about what his responsibility is. We have an absolute responsibility. The difference is this: positionally you do not have to be the source of the resources. The Holy Spirit is the source of resources for you to be responsible. You don't generate these things within yourself. That is part of the gift that the Holy Spirit Who gives you the resources.

That is what grace is. Remember, in Romans 5, you are standing in grace. You've got all the grace you'll ever need to be responsible. You and I just need to be responsible. The word "responsibility" is knowing and doing

what is expected of me. We need to be a responsible follower of Christ. You need to know and do what is expected of you. What you are finding out in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1 is what you need to know and what you are supposed to do. But you have to realize this, I'm not the source of that. It is not my resources that make this happen, it is the resources of God's grace that puts me in the position of even having a desire to want to do this. Because if I didn't have God's grace, I would not have the desire to do this. You have an absolute responsibility but you are not the resources of it. That's the whole point of the Beatitudes when Jesus said "Blessed are you." He's teaching the people that when you enter the Kingdom of Heaven, you are not to be the resources of your own life. That comes to you as the blessings of redemption. All the blessings of being in Christ and you now have the resources. Romans 5 says, "You are standing in grace." You don't move in and out of grace; you are not in grace one day and out of grace the next day. You are in grace because you have access to God. You have all the resources that you need. You just need to be responsible and that means: what do I need to know and what do I need to do to express my being **in** Christ?

So here are some of the things we need to do. 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1.1. "Simon Peter, a bond servant for and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours...", (this isn't everybody, but is for those who are what? **In** Christ...that is to whom he is writing) "...a faith as the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ;" What kind of faith is it? It is faith based upon the righteousness of Christ, not the achievements of man. See that? This isn't for everybody. It is for those who are **in** Christ and you understand what it means to be justified because God views you now as righteous; that is the key word there—righteousness—of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:2-. "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord;" (now here is some of the knowledge that we need to know) "seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness," (you are not the resources of your own life, you have been given all the resources you will ever need through the grace of God) "through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His Own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for that very reason" (now here is your transition, here is your cause and affect, you have all the resources you need in Christ Jesus) "...now for that reason all the promises of God, (you have everything you will ever need to know to live out your sanctification) "now for that reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence." (he lists seven things; notice he says...) "you've been given the resources..." (here is your responsibility, work on these seven things. The word diligence there means do more than what is reasonably required. There are certain requirements of us and that is our responsibility, my knowing and my doing what is expected of me. You cannot just say that this is all of God and not of me; this is not let go and let God. This is not what we're talking about. We're talking about God has given me the resources for me to now be responsible.

This is the first time in my life that I can actually be responsible. If I am in Adam, I cannot be responsible; I'm irresponsible because I am an enemy. But now that I'm **in** Christ, for the first time I have the possibility of being responsible. And what is responsibility? It is knowing and doing what is expected of you. The word "responsibility" is made up of two words: response and ability. I now have the ability to respond. I didn't have that before hand because I was not standing in grace. Now that I am standing in grace because of justification, for the first time in my life I can actually become responsible because I know what I'm supposed to do, and I have been given the resources to do it. I've been an irresponsible slob all of my life but now that I'm **in** Christ I can actually become responsible. That means: able to respond. That is where I get the phrase aggressive

responder. See, now you can become an aggressive responder because you know what you are supposed to do and you can become responsible.

Here are some of the things we are to work on. Notice the first one is morale excellence. Why do you think moral excellence is first? Some people would say that the first thing you need to be is loving. Love is the last. Love is the consequence of the first six. You are going to see in this progression, because these seven different character qualities fit together like a spoke of a wheel. Number one leads you to number two and number two completes number one. Number two leads to number three and completes number two. Three leads to four and so fourth. These are in a divinely and sovereignly imposed order. Notice the consequence, the last one of these is love. Let me read these.

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:4. “For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature,” (there is the transformation of your life, positional sanctification and He is now talking about transformational sanctification, you are going to demonstrate the fact that you are sanctified) “...having escaped the corruption that is in this world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying with all diligence in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control; and in your self-control perseverance; and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness, love.” Notice what is the end result of all these? Love. Guys, there is a great principle here. Love can be learned and love can be taught.

You can learn how to love...here is your process. Start with your moral excellence. Why does that come first? Some people would say, love should be the first thing. No, moral excellence is your first thing. Why is that? Any ideas? You just said you are **in** Christ, right? Then act like it. If you say you are **in** Christ, then act like it. The first thing people are going to see is not your love but your moral excellence. They are going to see the choices you make in life as a man. That’s why you work on your moral excellence. That is the idea of virtue. Express your moral excellence by the choices you make because you’re saying, “I’m being transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit, I now stand in grace.” The first evidence of that is the choices I make in my morality.

Then on top of that, what do you need to know? You need to know more about how to become more moral. The next thing is knowledge. Knowledge is the desire to know and then in your knowledge, self-control. Self-control is such a critical aspect. It’s bringing all my thoughts, words, deeds and attitudes into constant obedience. Work on that. That is a responsibility. Exercise self-control. The next time somebody stabs you in the back, don’t mouth off at him. Choose a moral excellent thing because you know what your responsibility is: I’m **in** Christ and I’ll give a different response. We’ll get into that when we talk in the next few weeks when we talk about what it means to be **like** Christ. We are **like** Christ in our moral excellence. At the human level, not the divine level.

Self-control is bringing my thoughts, words, deeds, and attitudes into constant obedience. OK? Work on that. It’s your responsibility. Notice what happens when you exercise self-control. What is the next result of that? Evidence of self-control is what? Perseverance. You cannot persevere unless you exercise self-control. That’s why self-control is before perseverance. If you want to persevere, bring all your thoughts, words, deeds, attitudes into constant obedience. What will be the result? You’ll be persevering. The word “persevere” means to remain under for the glory of God...remain in the situation without demanding God to give you time to release it. Perseverance is remaining in the situation and not demanding God to release you from it. That’s perseverance. You cannot do that unless you are exercising what? Self-control. And you cannot exercise self-control unless you do what? You have knowledge. And you cannot exercise knowledge unless you are what?



Morally excellent. These fit together, there is a divine process here. These are not just random expressions of character qualities. What happens after perseverance? You persevere Godliness. See, perseverance demonstrates Godliness. Godliness is the highest quality of life.

Yes, Sir.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *It all starts with faith.*

Absolutely. If you don't have faith, none of this applies. If you don't have any faith, you don't have any resources. This is not resources in your own life, this is not my little red choo choo that says, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." It is this: "I realize that I can't, apart from the grace of God, I can't; but now I have a changed disposition because of the grace of God on which I stand because I have been justified, because I'm **in** Christ and as a result of that, now for the first time I have the resources to do these things and be responsible."

After Godliness is brotherly kindness. Brotherly kindness is the word "Philadelphia" and it means love for a brother. You practice that on the body of Christ and the end result of that is love—agape love—sacrificial love. The consequence of these responsibilities is that you learn how to love. The greatest of these is love. If you want to learn how to love, there is your job description. Work on those things; start with your moral excellence. That is our responsibility because you are standing in grace. The point I want to make is this: these are not your resources, these resources come through your faith and the righteousness of the person and work of Christ. But you and I have an absolute responsibility.

As Bishop Rodgers just summarized for us, there is a positional sanctification and there is a transformational sanctification. This is the transformational side where you are working on this because it is your responsibility as a follower of Christ and you now have your opportunity for the first time in your life, because you are no longer in Adam but you are **in** Christ, and for the first time you can be responsible. See what great freedom that is. For the first time in my life, I'm not an irresponsible slob. For the first time in my life, I have a chance to be responsible because of the grace of God and you have union **with** Christ and you are **in** Christ. You are a new creation—created **in** Christ Jesus for good works. This all fits together. You have to understand what it means that you are **in** Christ. This is not just some theological mish-mash. It is the reality of a transformed life because God gives you His life—He breathes His life into you through faith. The critical issue is: "To those who have received a faith as the same kind as ours." What is that faith based upon? "The righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ."

Your faith is based upon His righteousness, not your good works. The result of that, folks, is that you get a chance to be responsible for the very first time. Does that help?

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *Thank you.*

You gonna leave now that I answered it? {LAUGHTER}

So brothers, we are talking about all these things as a part of our new life **in** Christ and what it means to be **in** Christ. Let's take a look in a few minutes...all of our actions can be done **in** Christ.

Yes, please.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *I'm struggling with the context and definition of Godliness. Could you help me a little with that? It seems almost out of place in the sequence [UNCLEAR]. Strong's definition is defining... I'm not quite getting what that means.*

Godliness is quality of life. It means quality of life. In other words...we'll talk about that when we get into what it means that we are **like** Christ. We'll get into that more in a week or so. Basically, it means quality of life.

The quality of your life is the reflection of Godliness. It doesn't mean divine characteristics and we need to understand that as we get into the study of what it means that we live at the human level. There are certain things that we live at the human level but are expressions of Godliness. But basically, it means quality of life. Godliness is a quality of life that you and I have because we are working on our moral excellence, we increase it with knowledge, we exercise self-control, self-control leads to perseverance, and perseverance expresses itself in my quality of life. That quality of life leads us to have affection for our brother and affection for our brother leads us to loving sacrificially. That's how it all fits together. They all fit together like that, like a spoke of a wheel.

Carl?

**CARL:** *I think what we have to remember also is what our condition was when we were outside of Christ and now that we are **in** Christ, our position is that we are **in** Christ and that brings about the Godliness as we start to grow **with** Christ.*

Absolutely. Yes, the key phrase is...we are talking about position. This is how God views you positionally. It doesn't mean that He is removing all of your personality or any of those things. No, you can express that as part of your Godliness. But we're talking about positionally you are **in** Christ and that is how God views us; you begin to express that over time as we mature in our faith.

Well, I'll tell you what, next time look at number four: All of our actions are done **in** Christ. Why is that possible? Because you are **in** Christ. That means all of your actions can be done **in** Christ because you **are in** Christ. Every action in our lives can be done **in** Christ if they're done by faith and the power of His kingdom and for His glory. That's where we get back to the definition of a good work, according to the Scripture, done by faith and done with the right motive. You and I can do all those things **in** Christ Jesus because we are **in** Him.

I'll just give you one verse and then we'll pick this up again next week. "I can do all things in Him Who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13. "I can do all things in Him..." You don't do all things in you, you do all things **in** Him; why is that? Because you are **in** Christ. Who is the source of your life? That's what grace is. Remember the acrostic grace—God's Resources At Christ's Expense. You have all the resources that you will ever need because of God's grace. When you are justified by faith, you are standing in that grace. You don't move in and out of it but you have all the grace that you will ever need, because that is God's resource at Christ's expense. That means I can do all things **in** Him Who strengthens me. He is the resources. You and I should never run out of resources and that is where our faith comes in.

One of the examples in the Beatitudes that Jesus teaches is this: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy." You and I should never run out of mercy. Why is that? Because you are not the source of it. Who is

the source of it? Christ is. “Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.” That means there may be a time when you have to say, “Lord, I don’t want to be merciful. I don’t have what it takes to be merciful, let alone having a thought of being merciful. Look what she’s done to me. I just don’t want to do that. You’re going to have to be my mercy for me and express that for me because I don’t have the resource to do that. I need to trust you by faith that you will give me the resources to be merciful because I cannot do that on my own.” That is walking by faith. Sometimes, guys, you have to be honest with yourself and say, “I just can’t do it.” That is when you fall on your knees and just pray, “Lord, give me the resources. You are my resources.” That is what it means to trust Him and walk by faith. So you and I walk by faith, not by sight.

Sometimes, guys, I just don’t want to do those things and I have to battle in my mind and say, “Lord, remove those thoughts because if you don’t do that, I’m going to be resource-less. But I need to know that Your grace is my resources. So, will You be my mercy for me? You’ve got to do that because I just don’t want to do it. Will You be my grace? Will You be my resources? Will You be my mercy? Will You express that?” Watch what happens. All of a sudden that is when the ministry of the Holy Spirit comes in and begins to change your disposition and your attitude, and all of a sudden something happens differently. It may not be like a lightening bolt hitting you, but all of a sudden you just begin to think differently. That is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, by walking by faith. We’ll talk more about that in the future weeks.

Any other questions today? Since there are none, let’s pray. {LAUGHTER}

Gracious, heavenly Father, thank You that You do not leave us resource-less but You alone are our resource. Thank You for Your grace, that which is so undeserving. Father, help us to just think right so that we can act right, so that we will feel right. Help us battle with our own mind, help us deal with what the world says about us and contrast that with who You say we are. Father, may we walk out this door just realizing the magnificent gift of Your grace and that we are created in Christ Jesus for good works, which You have prepared beforehand, and that we should walk in them, and that we can express our oneness in Christ because of Your grace. Thank you, Father, that You have done for us what we cannot do for ourselves and that is to redeem us. You have rescued us from being in Adam and transferred us into the Kingdom of Your Son Whom You love, and because of that we are now in Christ. We just say, thank You Father for Jesus’ sake. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.”