

TRIUMPHANT LIVING
Taught by Bruce Bickel
Union With Christ, Part 12
Session: August 2, 2013

Well Brothers, let us go quietly before the Lord and remain in His presence as our musicians help us think correctly today before we sit at the throne of grace and have Him teach us. Let's just be quiet and know that He is God.

MUSIC.

Gracious Lord, I wish I could surrender all.

We give a lot of lip service to that. We think we do it well but in reality, there are so many things that we hold in our lives because of our ego, our pride, our sinfulness.

Father, just expose those things to us today. We know the greatest thing that can happen to us is to have our sins exposed because You have sent us a Savior Who has taken away the sins of the world. When we have our sins exposed, we know we can deal with it. So Father, we pray that You would convict us, You would convince us, and You would conform us to the image of Christ. Most of all Father, we do not ask for answers but we just ask in these moments as we have our fellowship and sit at Your throne of grace, that Your Holy Spirit be our teacher; and that You would be pleased to give us a clear vision of Who You are in all of Your glory and Your majesty, and all of Your magnificent beauty. May we see the beauty of Christ today as we sit at Your feet and trusting the Holy Spirit to open our eyes that we might behold You more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen.

Well Brothers, we have great reason to rejoice; as Don taught us last week, rejoicing is one of the responsibilities of Christian discipline. There are many things that we have to do in our Christian life and one of those things is to rejoice. Now there are many reasons why we rejoice. Rejoicing is not so much a single action as it is an attitude of lifestyle. It is just like worship is something you do but worship is something you give. Worship is a verb. You don't go to church to get a blessing, you go to church to give one because worship is something that we are. When we look at Romans 12...go there very quickly with me. Rejoicing is a mindset, it is an attitude of life, it is based upon how we think and the Scripture gives us every reason for us to rejoice.

Romans 12:1. "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." Worship is not something that occurs for just one hour a week, on the Lord's day. It is a style of life, it is a mindset. When you and I understand the little card we gave you, that we passed out...and Chuck we want to make sure you and your men get these. It is a little thing just to remind us that we need to think correctly. When we think correctly, rejoicing becomes part of our lifestyle. It is something we do all the time, it is something we are, it is something that we begin to have as an expression of our gratitude for God's mercy to us. Happiness is based upon the happenings of life. You're happy when things go well, and happiness is based upon the various happenings that go on around us.

But blessedness is based upon managing the happenings of life with God's grace. That is when you are truly blessed. The word "blessed" as Jesus teaches us in Matthew 5 and the Beatitudes, "Blessed are those who are

poor in spirit, blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God..." and all the wonderful attitudes of gratitude you see in the Beatitudes. It is based upon a little Greek word makarios, which means happy in spite of circumstances. That is what it means to be blessed. It means your life is not dictated by the circumstances in which you find yourself, but your life is guided by the attitude of your mind in rejoicing because you have so many reasons to rejoice, and there is probably no greater understanding of our having the ability to rejoice than our understanding of what it means to have union **with** Christ and what we have been studying the last several months and that is this: we are **in** Christ. Do you realize Brothers that God looks at you...if you are **in** Christ today, if you have saving faith...what God has ordained, the Son has accomplished, and the Holy Spirit has applied...if you have saving faith because of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit?

God has viewed you from eternity past in only one way: He has viewed you as being **in** Christ. He sees you no other way. He sees you as **in** Christ. Years ago at my first church in Kansas City and after I left the fellowship of Christian Athletes, one of the things we tried to do with our children was to integrate them into the worship service. It was our particular commitment and we felt if they were a first grader and they could go to school and sit in class for a couple of hours, they could sit in the worship service. So we had anyone who was in first grade on up sitting with their parents, and that was by design and had an intended purpose to help create the family worship. We gave our children a piece of paper and a pencil when they came in; to the adults we gave the bulletin for the worship service but to the children we gave a piece of paper and a pencil. The very first time I would get up to preach, I would give about a 30-45 second introduction just to the children and say, "This is what we are going to talk about today and I want you to draw the sermon, and after you draw the sermon and when you get in your car, I want you to go back and teach your mom and dad what you learned today in this sermon." {LAUGHTER} We were trying to create some dialogue between the mothers and the fathers and the children on the way home so that there would be a dialogue, not about the Steelers or the Kansas City Chiefs, but it would be about what the Holy Spirit taught us as a family. The children could hold up their picture and say, "Mom, Dad, this is what I learned today in the sermon."

I was preaching a sermon about being **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, and He describes them as being **in** Christ. That is how God views you. When we talk about our worth, and our esteem, and our value, it really comes because of how God views us, not how we view ourselves. There is no greater value that God can give us as in saying, "Look, I view you simply as this: I view you as **in** Christ." So while I was teaching that in this particular sermon, this young first grade girl came up to me afterwards. Her name was Shauna and she came up and said, "Pastor Bruce, here is the sermon." She had taken her hand and outlined it...her five fingers...and then she drew a stick figure of a little girl in a dress. That was her picture. I asked what she had learned in the sermon and she said, "Well this is what it means to be **in** Christ, because I am in the hands of Jesus you said that Jesus could never take me out of His hands." John 10: "No one can snatch them out of My hands." I'm thinking: "I've got to teach her?" {LAUGHTER} I mean, she got it and she understood this: What Jesus says in John 10: "Those whom you gave me, no one can take them away. and no one is going to snatch them out of my hands." Why is that? It's because God views you as being **in** Christ. And no one is going to snatch you out of God's hand.

The other thing we did in our Fellowship Hall is that we took all the pictures of the children's sermons, we put them up on the wall, and they had their name on it. So they would come and say, "Mom, dad, here is the sermon that Pastor Bruce preached on such and such a day. And we had pictures, the kids drew the sermons. It was our way of trying to integrate the children into the family worship, and there were some wonderful

discussions on the way home about the children describing to mom and dad what they learned in the sermon because they drew it. All of a sudden we had a bunch of first, second, third, fourth and fifth graders really wanting to listen to the sermon because they started drawing it. It was just an idea that we had. How can we Get the children involved in listening to the message? We knew that they liked to be activity oriented, so we had them draw the sermon. I just spoke to Shauna last week. I performed her wedding about twenty years ago and now her son is interested, Bishop Rodgers, in going to the U.S. Naval Academy. {MUCH LAUGHTER} So here is this young, little girl who drew this picture of what it means to be **in** Christ. You are in Jesus' hand. Now her son wants to go to Annapolis. I would say that is rather intriguing isn't it? {MUCH LAUGHTER} So I spent about an hour and a half on the phone with him the other night, prepping him on what he needs to do to get his nomination from his senator, his congressman in the State of Kansas. But the whole story is so wonderful, I have just begun to realize this little picture that Shauna drew when she was in first grade...first grade. She understood that this is what it means to be **in** Christ.

Well men, do you understand the implications of that? If you want a reason to rejoice, don't look at the economy, don't look at your 401K, don't look at the fact that the Steelers are back in session again, or the Pirates won four out of five from the Cardinals; that's nice and those are nice "happenings," but that is not what is going to bless your life. What is going to bless your life is the realization of this: "These happenings are going on and I can manage it because of the grace of God, because I am **in** Christ.

Turn with me to John 14. Today we want to look at our last sequence of our study of our Union **With** Christ. We have been looking so far at we are **in** Christ and we saw that Christ is **in** us. We saw the last couple weeks that we are to be **like** Christ...we are to be **like** Christ...and now we want to understand that we are **with** Christ.

John 14. Various psychiatrists and psychologists say that for a person to feel secure and significant, they need to feel two things: they need to feel secure and significant. Security is "the feeling of being unconditionally loved." People need to "feel unconditionally loved"...that's security. Significance is "the feeling of being involved in something of value." The feeling of being involved in something of value. For someone to feel secure and significant, which is the basis of their stability in their worth and their value. Psychiatrists and psychologists would say there are only two things that people need: they need to have this sense...this feeling...of being unconditionally loved. Where are you going to get that? You are not going to get that in the happenings of life. You are going to get that in the saving relationship to the personal work of Christ because you are **in** Christ. That is where you are going to get that "feeling" of significance, that feeling of security. And significance is being involved in something of value. We all want to be involved in something of value and that is where we feel our significance.

There is no greater value that we can be involved in than giving away to somebody else what God has given us. Do you know what that's called? Ministry. Ministry is giving away to somebody else what you know that God has given you. But if you do not know what God has given you, first of all you are not going to be very secure, and you certainly are not going to be very significant because you have nothing to give away. When you understand what God has given you and you give that away, that may just be an act of compassion...you realize that Christ was compassionate to me and I now have something to give to somebody else. You realize that God has been merciful to you and you now have something to give away to somebody else. You know that Jesus was kind to you, and you now have something else to give away to somebody else. When you do that, men, you are involved in something of significance because you are giving away to somebody else what God has given you. That is the greatest, most simple definition of ministry.

Look at John 14. In order for somebody to feel significant and secure they need to have two things: a place and a relationship. A place where they feel comfortable and the relationship where they feel secure. Notice in John 14:21-23. “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” Now you begin to see that there is a relationship developing between God the Father and God the Son **in** us. “Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, ‘Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.’” In other words Our home, Our place of residency with him.

This is the last thing we want to look at in our study of our union **with** Christ. We are **with** Him. Christ is **in** us, we are **in** Christ, we are **like** Christ, and we are **with** Christ. Notice, here is where it begins...it begins in this saving, regenerated relationship where the Father comes and makes His abode with us.

John 14:24. “”He who does not love Me does not keep My words, and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s Who sent Me.” The phrase “We will come and make Our abode **with** him” in John 14:23...you know the two things that psychologists will say that people must have to feel significant and secure...that is a place and a relationship. Where are they both found? They are found in the saving relationship to God the Father through God the Son. They are found in the personal relationship **with** Jesus Christ.

Many of you know in my life, as you have been a major part of this with me with the orphanage in Vietnam, and years ago when I was there during my second tour as a Forward Air Controller, we built an orphanage in the City of Hue. When I wasn’t flying missions, I began to teach these young Vietnamese children the English language. The only textbook I had that I purposely used was the Bible. I was using the Bible as a textbook to teach them how to speak English. I thought the greatest thing I can ever do for these children is to introduce them to the most important verse in all of the Scripture. By far the most important verse, and that is Genesis 1:1. “In the beginning, God...” Because if you don’t understand that, Brothers, John 3:16 makes no sense at all. You have to understand this: “In the beginning, God... .” Those were the first four words they learned in English after they learned their swearing from the Army. {LAUGHTER}

Many background comments and laughter from the audience.

I’m off on a detail...many of you know the story of the young boy whom we found living in a garbage can and he was probably the rottenest human being I had ever met; his parents had been executed by the Vietcong and he had no living relatives. We found him when he was nine years old and we brought him into the orphanage and began teaching him how to read the Scripture. The Old Testament one week and the New Testament the next and I was just trusting that the Holy Spirit, who is the ultimate teacher, would somehow draw these little boys and girls to Himself through the proclamation of biblical truth. I knew that I could not convert any of these children. I could not bring them to saving faith; all I could do is expose them to the truth of the Scripture and let the Holy Spirit do His work. Notice what the Scripture says in verse 23: “...If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.” When this young boy read John 14:23, he looked up at me and said this: “Does that mean I can have a father?” He was an orphan...he read John 14:23: “... and My Father will love him,...” And he said: “Does that mean I can have a father?” And I said, “Yes.” “..., and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”

In that passage it also says, “We will no longer leave you as orphans.” This little boy had no father, no earthly father that he knew of. All of a sudden, the Holy Spirit was pleased to open his eyes, remove the shackles of

blindness from his heart, and the little boy said, “You mean I can have a place and a relationship? I can have a father? And God will love me and I can love Him and I will have a father?” That was the moment that little boy came to saving faith. The Lord was pleased to regenerate that little boy. His life radically changed because of two things, he knew this: there was a place and a relationship that he could have through the saving grace of God. He became the little boy who became a leader among the other orphans. He was very special to me because when I came back, he developed a real heart for ministry...just giving away what God had given him.

I told you the story of the little boy who wanted to give his blood so his other friend would live. Remember that story? That was Hai. That was the little boy who said, “You mean I can have a father?” He was the one who did that. I’ve told you the story before about the little boy giving his blood?

I’ll just tell it again quickly. I got a call on my radio one day from the military MPs (the Military Police of the Army) who said, “Your friends in the city of Hue want you to come in because there was a rocket attack from the city and some people were injured. So I got in my jeep and drove the 88 miles through the jungle and went down to the orphanage. This one little boy whose name was Dang (spelling?) had been hit by a piece of shrapnel and part of his arm had been blown off. They put a tourniquet on to stop the bleeding and they thought that I as an American Naval Officer could get him into the Army hospital quicker than they could. So we took him in my jeep to the hospital. Immediately, the surgeon started performing surgery on him and the doctor came out and said, “Bruce, we are going to have to get some blood to save the little boy’s life. Do you know of anyone who would give blood?” And your response would be the same as mine. “Here take some of mine.” He said, “Well, we probably should have it from a Vietnamese because of the immune systems and their blood system is different than yours and we need to get it from a Vietnamese. Do you know of someone who might give him blood?” So we went back to the orphanage and here I was in my well-educated English way telling these forty children, ages four to thirteen, that unless someone came up and gave blood, their little friend would die. Finally, after a few minutes of my trying to do that with the interpreter, Paster Nguyen (spelling?) my Vietnamese pastor friend who was interpreting for me, a little boy came up and squeezed my hand. It was the little boy who said, “You mean I can have a father? You mean I am no longer an orphan, I can have a family?” His name was Hai, and I took him down to the army surgical tent and they started drawing blood from his arm. After a few minutes he began to cry and the surgeon came over and said, “Could you come over and find what’s wrong?”

I knew language would be a problem so my pastor friend went over and talked to him. And this is the conversation they had, and I never fully understood the significance of it until I was later wounded and spent time in naval hospitals on my way back to the States. When my pastor friend went over, the conversation went something like this, Pastor: “Why are crying, does the needle hurt?” He said, “No.” Pastor asked: “Are you getting sick in your stomach, are you going to pass out?” The little boy looked up to the man who was now his earthly father, the Pastor, and said, “No.” And finally, in desperation, the Pastor said, “Well, tell me why you are crying?” And this little boy who some months before said, “You mean I can have a father and I am no longer an orphan?” He looked up to the eyes of the man who is now his earthly father and said, “How long is it going to take me to die?” You see, he thought that when a well-educated naval officer said, “We need some blood to save your friend’s life” he thought I meant all of it. He didn’t know that I was only talking about a pint, and he literally thought this: “They are going to take the blood from my life, run it through this tube, and put it into my little friend’s life and he will live and I will die.”

Now, you do not act like that unless something supernatural has happened in your life, and that is the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit Who took the blinders off your eyes and gave you saving faith. And that

little boy thought, literally, “that God has given me grace and a life to live and I can give that away.” One of the greatest illustrations of ministry I have ever seen. The life of an eleven-year-old Vietnamese orphaned boy, who one day the Holy Spirit was pleased to convict him of this: you can have a place and you can have a relationship because you will be **with** Jesus. That is where you value your worth and everything comes in. You see that is ministry; it all starts from the realization of this: that I am **in** Christ; that Christ is **in** me; we can be **like** Christ; and we are **with** Christ. The reason we can be **with** Christ is because there is a place and there is a relationship that we have through the saving work of God the Father, through God the Son. John 14.

Let me take you to some other verses. Look at Matthew 28:18-20...the Great Commission. Go down to verse 20 please. Let’s start at verse 19, let’s go back up to verse 18. {LAUGHTER} I want to keep things in the right context.

Beginning at Matthew 28:18-20. “And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’ Who runs your life? Do you really think that you are the captain of your own ship? Jesus says, “All authority has been given to **Me**...not only authority to run things in heaven but also run things in life.” That is why, men, happiness is based upon happenings, but blessedness is based upon managing the happenings in your life by God’s grace. That is because of the magnificent, sovereignty and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Who has authority of your life. And because of that authority, He says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teaching men to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am **with** you always, even to the end of the age.”

Why is it that faith-based organizations are the most effective? It is because of perseverance, it is because of long-term vision, it is because they have a stick-to-it-ness that other non-profit organizations do not have...that are not faith-based. I work with giving grants to foundations and organizations all over the country and I am just amazed at the perseverance of those that are faith-based oriented because they know this: “I am **with** you always.” Guys that has tremendous implications in your life. The first thing it ought to do is to teach us to rejoice as Don taught us last week. There is a reason for us to have a mentality, a mindset of rejoicing every moment of our life because I know this: “I am **with** you always to the end of the age.” That means you are never alone. You may be lonely, you may have a feeling of being lonely but, Brothers, you are never alone. That means wherever you are, you are in the presence of Christ because you are **in** Christ, Christ is **in** you, you are **like** Christ, and you are **with** Christ to the end of the age. You are always **with** Him. A cause of great rejoicing.

Jesus’ human body descended to haven, John 16:7-8. These verses speak of His Divine Nature being with us. You and I have the Divine Nature of Christ being **with** us all the time...you are never alone because you are now in a place and a relationship. The place is **in** your heart and the relationship is **with** the Son. And you take that wherever you go...you take that wherever you go.

Look at John 16:7-8. “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away...;” Now Jesus is referring to His ascension to heaven. “...for if I do not go away, the Helper...” the Holy Spirit... “will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...”

Jesus is saying, “Look, the reason I have to go is because when I am here in the duality of My divinity and My humanity, I can only be in one place at one time. But when I go and take up my residency with God the Father, which I had before eternity past in all of His glory, and We came up with this wonderful strategy called

regeneration and conversion, and when I agreed to do what the Father ordained I would accomplish so that Our Holy Spirit could apply...I am going to go back to that. And the reason I am going to go back is so that I can send the Holy Spirit Who will be **with** you wherever you go and you will never be alone. Because if I do not go I can only be here in one spot but because I do go, We will send the Holy Spirit Who will come and be **with** you wherever you go and He will be **with** you, and I will be **with** you to the end of the age.”

You are never alone because you have a place and you have a relationship. The two things we need in our life to feel significant and secure is the place and the relationship. Where is that? It is wherever you are...it is wherever you are. It is not in some location. It is who you are as a person because of this union **with** Christ. You are **in** Christ, Christ is **in** you, we are **like** Christ, and we are **with** Him. The great cause of our rejoicing, as Don taught us last week, is the realization that I’ve got a place and I’ve got a relationship; and wherever I go, I am **in** that place and I am **in** that relationship because that relationship is **inside** of me. It is not something that is external, it is something that the Divine Nature has implanted His life **within** us and we are **in** Christ, and Christ is **in** us. This is a very, very personal presence that we have: a place and a relationship in which we work together **with** Christ. That means that whatever you and I now do, we do **with** Christ, we do not do it alone because you have a place in a relationship and you are **with** Him, and that means that whatever you do you are no longer doing it by yourself.

Look at 2nd Corinthians 6:1. What a powerful statement this is. This can be very, very convicting to those of us who have massive egos such as myself when I think I can actually make a difference. One of the great realizations I had about twenty years ago that really impacted me as much as anything was this realization...that I cannot make a difference about anything. I used to think, “She can be right four times but I’ll be right five times because I can do one more thing right than she can do.” And that means, I can change it. I can make a difference because I am going to be more right than she or he is going to be right. And then I realized one of these days I had made “being right and correct” an idol. I was an idolater. I was trusting some thing or someone to give me only what God can give me. That is what idolatry is.

Idolatry is trusting someone or some thing to give you only what God can give you. Paul understood that when he said, “If somebody has confidence in the flesh, it’s me. I had the right ethnic background, born into the right family, had the right education, went to the right church, and I was perfectly obedient in all of my righteousness.” Then he says this, “When God was pleased to reveal Himself to me, I realized this: that I have been crucified **with** Christ, and it is no longer I who live but it is Christ who lives **in** me.” You see, he had to die to his being right. And I realized, men, that my ego was so big and so immense that I really thought that my being correct could make a difference; because if I’m right it will change things and God will owe me to change this situation and to change this person because I have been right. Now I had to confess that as an idolatry act of sin, and here is one of the verses that convicted me of it.

2nd Corinthians 6:1. “And working together **with** Him...” Now wait a minute, you mean it is not up to me? You mean I do not make the difference? No. “...working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain.” Because we are **in** Christ and Christ is **in** us, and because we are **like** Christ, and because we are **with** Him that means that whatever we do we are working **with** Him. That means who becomes the resources of our energy. It’s the work of the Holy Spirit, it is the presence of the Divine Christ, The Divine Spirit **within** us...He is the energizing source. That is why one of the great tenants of Christian faith is the perseverance of the saints. I like to refer to us as the preservation of the saints. God preserves us so we persevere. That is because you are **with** Him, and that means whatever you do, you are working **with** Him. That is why we do not get discouraged. While we are here let’s look at 2nd Corinthians 4:1.

Do you realize, men, that ministry is an act of mercy and it is not a result of your achievements or your talent? Now that doesn't mean that you do not work hard, I'm not saying that. Yes, we need to study, yes we need to work hard, and we need to be responsible. I'm not saying that you are being sloppy about this. Please understand what I am not saying. I am saying this: ministry is not a function of what you do; it is a function of who you are.

2nd Corinthians 4:1. "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart..." Why is it that we in the Christian faith do not get discouraged...lose heart? Because you realize this: that ministry is a function of God's mercy. Ministry is a function of God's mercy, not human achievement. God permits you to be involved in what He has been doing because He has been merciful to you. And why is it that you are involved in ministry? Because you are giving away to somebody else what He has given you. Little **Hi** gave away what he thought God had given him and that was new life. He realized this: "He has given me life, I can give my friend life." That is mercy. You see we are involved in ministry, men, because God is merciful to us. We have this ministry because God has been merciful and we do that **with** Him. That means, where do all the resources of your ministry come? It comes because of your union **with** Christ. You are **with** Him; He becomes the source of all of your resource for your ministry. That is why Paul says in the Scripture of 2nd Corinthians 4:1 "...do not lose heart..." You do not give up; your heart is not weakened; you do not get discouraged; you hang in there. That is why faith based non-profit organizations, are the most effective because they do not lose heart because they have an understanding of this: they are involved in something of significance. They are involved in something of significance and that is giving away to somebody else what God has given them. They understand mercy. Brothers, that is a cause for great rejoicing.

Our life ought to be a continual of expression of rejoicing because we understand this: God views me as being **in** Christ; He does not see me any other way. I realized a cause of great rejoicing is that He not only sees me as **in** Christ but Christ is **in** me. He has made His abode **with** me and I am no longer an orphan. And thirdly, we realize that a cause for great rejoicing is that we have a chance to give away to other people what He has given us...that is, we are **like** Christ. Lastly, the summary is this: we are **with** Him. "And I am **with** you to the end of the world."

Men, you are never, ever alone. You might feel lonely. There are times when I feel lonely and I have to remind myself to think not according to the system of this world, but be renewed by the transformation of my mind and think upon the truths of Scripture that I know this: "Lord I know that you are **with** me. You have established Your abode **in** me; I now have a Father; I have a place and a relationship and I am taking that **with** me." So when you go to work, you are not involved in anything secular in your life any more. Do you realize that? There is no secular aspect of your life...it is all a life of obedience to Christ. When you go to work, you are no more less in the presence of Christ than you are in church. It is because you have a place and you have an abode. You are **with** Him. That is a cause of great rejoicing. You can go to your work and rejoice.

Just think what would happen if all believers would go to their jobs and rejoice, what would happen? It could radically change a lot of things in corporate America, couldn't it? If we could quit complaining and just rejoice and realize this: I am going to manage the happenings in my daily life at my work or office today by the grace of God, and that means I am going to be blessed. That is why in my life I have learned, having been in corporate America now for 25 years, which was not my plan in my life, but God was pleased because He had authority to do what He wanted with my life. Far different than what I thought it would turn out to be. He is much more creative and much more effective than my planning. But I realized this: the greatest thing I do for

my employer, now they do not know this, is that I go to work fulfilled every day. I do not derive my fulfillment from my job, I take it to my job. Now that does not mean that I do not enjoy what I do, I really enjoy what I do but I am not fulfilled by that. I take my fulfillment to the job every day. And that is why when I step into my office, I can rejoice and I am going to manage the happenings of today's activity by the grace of God and at the end of the day I am going to be blessed because I know this: I am **with** Him. I am **with** Him and He is **with** me because I have a place and I have a relationship. And wherever I go, I am taking that place which is in my heart where Christ, the Holy Spirit, dwells through His Spirit. I am taking that with me wherever I am and I am never, ever alone. Never alone.

You see, the greatest thing we can do for our employer is take your fulfillment in your union **with** Christ to your job and watch what happens around you. Then you can just be an aggressive responder but see what happens around you. You do not need to go and create ministry...you are the ministry because you showed up. See the second thing that happens when you go to work, your employer won't know this either, but two things happen when you show up: you slow down sin and you expose corruption just because you are there. That is what happens...you slow down corruption. You are the salt of the earth. Jesus says in Matthew 5: "You are the salt of the earth." What does salt do? It slows down corruption. If you are the salt, notice that is a present tense verb—it doesn't say you ought to be salt and it doesn't say you might be salt, it doesn't say you should be salt—it doesn't say you can be salt. It says you are! When you have these attitudes of the Beatitudes in you...that you are blessed...you are managing the happenings of your life by God's grace; and you are happy in spite of circumstances. When you go to the office everyday, one thing that is naturally going to happen because it is supernatural, and that is...you are going to slow down corruption in the corporation of where you work. Because you are salt.

The second thing He says is that you are the light of the world. Light exposes sin. The second thing that happens when I go to work everyday...sometimes I see it and sometimes I do not...is this: my mere presence is slowing down corruption because I am **in** Christ, Christ is **in** me, I am **like** Christ, and Christ is **with** me. The supernatural consequence is that your presence is going to slow down the corruption of that institution because you are there. And the second thing is you might expose sin. That is not necessarily comfortable and that is not a consequence that you are in charge of. It just happens because you are there.

I could give you illustration after illustration of sin being exposed just by being there. That is what it means to be **in** Christ...you are involved in something of significance, men, just because you have a place and you have a relationship. That is what it means to have union **in** Christ. It means that God looks at you solely as being **in** Christ and when you go to work He does not view you in any other way. He does not view you as the position that you hold in that corporation. He views you as the position that you have with Him in eternity. And that is this: you are **in** Christ. You are **in** Christ. We know that Christ is **in** me and, therefore, I can be **like** Christ...not in His divinity but in the way in which He lived His life...and I can give away to other people what He has given me. The great consummate understanding of the summary of this union **with** Christ concept is this: we are **with** Him. We are **with** Him and we are never, ever alone.

Brothers, men, you have a place and you have a relationship, and that goes wherever you are because you are with Him.

Let's pray.

Lord, this is so freeing when it gets past our egos. It is so liberating when we realize that what we do, we do **with** You and not by ourselves and asking You to bless it. Father, help us to see what You are doing around us so that we can be aggressive responders to what You are doing around us. Help us to just understand the concept of our place and our relationship and that never leaves us because we are **with** You and wherever we are, You are **with** us, even to the end of this age. May we be the ones who persevere because You are preserving us for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen."

Have a blessed day!

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *In spite of the circumstances.*

Yes, in spite of the circumstances. {LAUGHTER}