

TRIUMPHANT LIVING

Taught by Don Maurer

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Our Father and our God, we thank You for the promises of Your Word. We thank You that indeed Your mercies are new every morning and so are Your compassions, and great is Your faithfulness. Father, in a world such as we live in with the hard times, Father, that are such a part of our lives and the world scene, it is so wonderful to know that in Christ we are secure, we are blessed; and I pray, Father, that as we learn the truth of Your Word this morning that You would help us to be aware of these great promises and the great blessings that You have for us as Your Church in the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, I pray that You would nullify anything that is said that is not of You and not of Your Word, and only that what is true...only what You have said will shine. May Jesus increase, may I decrease. In Jesus name we pray these things. Amen.

Bruce last week asked me to teach on the theme of “union with Christ” regarding the Church, and you see the handout entitled “The Church United With Christ.” The thing that I love about Bruce is that he gives me a topic and I’m not usually a good topical teacher. If he were to say something like, “Don, preach on Ephesians 1:3 through 14,” that is something that I like to do...to teach from the Biblical passage and exegete it; but it is good that he said what he said last week because that means that it forces me to depend on Christ and not upon my own resources when given a topic like this. So, we are going to do Ephesians 1:3 through 14 today. {LAUGHTER}.

We are going to do that as a springboard, a backdrop; there are many other scriptures that we are going to do but what I would like to do is to just read that blessed passage from Ephesians, beginning at verses 3 through 14, which I understand was one sentence in the original Greek. Here is the Word of God; this is the Word of the Living God.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him, in love having predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both of which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him. In Him, also we have obtained an inheritance being predestined according to the purpose of Him Who works all things according to the counsel of His will that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also trusted after you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Whom also having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who was the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory.”

This is such a glorious passage and I just want to make a few introductory remarks before we get into the meat of this. You know it is interesting to me that when I went through this passage I found ten times the phrase “in Him” or “in Christ.” All through Paul’s letters he uses that term. As we talk about the Church in union with Christ, we need to keep that in mind because it is so vitally, vitally important. We are “in Christ.” Even apart

from those words in that passage we hear “by Him,” or by His grace,” or “in whom” or whatever...to be **in** Christ.

Notice also the plural nature as we are talking about the Church. Paul talks about “us,” it does not just say “me” or “you” as in a singular term, but he says **in** Christ **we** were predestined; **we** were adopted; He chose **us** before the foundation of the world, etc. I want to emphasize as our Brother Ted has rightly said on a number of occasions, we live in a culture today in America, even in evangelical Christianity, where it is “me and Jesus.” Now, of course, we have to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; it is absolutely necessary and vital that we do, but so often it is, “What do I want, what do I like...it’s just me and Jesus...and we’ll go on our merry way and I don’t have to go to church, I don’t have to be a part of the body.” But there is in the New Testament no concept of that. There is no concept in the New Testament of “the lone ranger” Christian where it is just Jesus and me. It is the Church, the Church united **with** Christ. We are part of a body, I hope to show in our lesson today how glorious, and wonderful that is.

I want to dwell on four outstanding realities that are the benefit—the result of us as a body being united to Christ. Feel free to make any comments or ask any questions along the way.

The first thing I want to talk about is that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing **in** Christ. We could spend the rest of the time on this, and really number one is the springboard for the rest of these things, because really we are talking about all of these blessings that we have **in** Christ, all four of these realities or blessings. But this is the foundation, this is the starting point. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing **in** Christ.

I have some scriptures here on the handout and so I’ll be calling anyone who would like to read a particular scripture. The first one as we delve into the spiritual blessings is 1st Corinthians 1:30-31. Who would like to read that?

“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, Who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, that as it is written, He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

Thank you. Christ became for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We have those blessings from Him because He became all of those for us; not only was He our substitute on the cross and bore our sin, but He became all of those things too--wisdom, wisdom from God. The wisdom that the world, well it has always been that way, the Greeks and the Jews as Paul said in that Chapter in 1st Corinthians 1 regarding the cross’s foolishness and isn’t it that way today? That the world just regards as crazy, as nuts, as fools to believe in a crucified savior who they really don’t believe was risen from the dead, and that it is only through Him that we have salvation, that we have eternal life; the world regards that as foolishness. Yet we have the spiritual blessing that Christ has given us that we have wisdom from God. Righteousness...boy, Bruce is just so fond of telling us and we need to be reminded every week, particularly when we sin and we blow it, that we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and that from before time. That we are covered with His righteousness and we get credit, as Bruce says, for His sinless perfection; that is the only thing that we can stand on in the Day of Judgment. We have righteousness. Christ has become for us our sanctification where we are more and more conformed to the image of Christ and less and less to the image of Adam and our redemption—our redemption where we have been bought with a price, and we’ll be talking about those things a little bit later on. So all of those spiritual blessings and that’s not all, there are even more spiritual blessings. First Peter 2:7 through 10. Who would like to read that for us?

“Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious, but to those who are disobedient, a stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, they stumble being disobedient to the Word to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His Own special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, who once were not a people but now the people of God who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

Thank you. A precious, precious truth. Now it is obvious that God’s election of us before time and predestination are the foundation of this passage and these spiritual blessings. The doctrine that gives so many Christians trouble and gave me trouble...I mean I had to admit when I was in high school, the first time I encountered the teaching was in, of all places, a public school advanced placement European history book and they were talking about the Reformation and John Calvin. John Calvin believed you were saved or damned from birth and there was nothing you could do about it. I didn’t want to hear that, how dreadful, how absolutely dreadful. But now, because what Christ has done for me, it is a blessed teaching because it talks about the fact that God has loved me, He has loved you **in** Christ forever, from before time.

When I received a Braille New Testament, I saw those things and they were really in there and they were not something that John Calvin or other people invented. It’s in Ephesians; it’s in Romans and what a blessed truth it is: that you have been chosen **in** Him before time began, before the foundation of the world, God had you written on the palms of His hands, literally...if we can talk in the terms of the nail-scarred hands of Jesus. A precious, precious truth.

Notice the description of His Church. Let me just say this, that we have been called, called, into this marvelous life; called out of darkness into light. That’s what theologians call the effectual call. Let me ask you this: is every person called to faith in Jesus Christ? Is every person called to repent and believe? Someone says “No” and someone says “Yes.” You know what?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Many are called but few are chosen.*

Actually no and yes are both right, depending on how you say it. Everyone...the gospel goes out to everyone; it is a universal offer, isn’t it? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” But not all have the effectual calling, not all have the calling that Lazarus had if we can use that analogy when Jesus said “Lazarus come forth.” Unlike the Bible mini-series on the revised history channel {LAUGHTER} where Jesus doesn’t call Lazarus and where something happens where he just kisses his head or whatever. No, He said, “Lazarus, come forth.” And He sovereignly calls him and Lazarus does exactly that. And that is what happens to each of us when we are regenerated. But we are called; it is an effectual calling where that calling results in saving faith and repentance. It is a beautiful thing.

Notice the description of “we” as the Church of Jesus Christ. We are a chosen generation. There it is again... chosen, not because of anything in us, not because of anything we’ve done but because of God’s mercy. A chosen generation, chosen from before the foundation of the world. In Titus 1, “before time began...” It is an awesome thought, it gives me a headache just thinking about it. But it’s true.

We are a royal priesthood, kings and priests. Would someone read for us Revelation 1:5b, and 6?

“To Him who loves us and washed us from our sins in His Own blood and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father—to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Yes, Bruce, hit it right on the head last week when he said “And people want to talk about self-esteem.” I can’t think of anything greater than us as a Church and individually being kings and priests. We are kings, we reign with Christ now and some day we are going to reign with Him face to face. I don’t know what that’s going to be like. Last year whenever I taught, I gave a little bit of a description that I am not going to give now, but wow! We’re going to be kings, we are going to be reigning with Him in a Kingdom with responsibilities and we are going to be doing it gladly and cheerfully, without sin to get in the way. We are also priests, not an ordained office, but we are all priests. Luther and the Reformers talked about the priesthood of all believers. We don’t offer sacrifices, we don’t do any of that but we do intercede for one another, we do offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving in worship; so we are a royal priesthood.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *It says, “Offer up yourselves as living sacrifices.”*

Yes, it does, in Romans 12:2. That happens every day.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Hey, Don. I’m reminded of that scene from “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest…”* **DON:** Ah, yes, a great spiritual movie! {LAUGHTER}. ...*where he takes his brothers from the mental hospital on a bus ride, they end up on a boat, and the man who is tending the dock says, “Who are you and where are you from?” He introduced all these men, who a few minutes ago were thought to be insane, and he introduces them with titles... “Dr. so-and-so, and all of a sudden the man on the dock [UNCLEAR] may think they look like doctors and they take on the aura of being intellectuals as opposed to being crazy. And when I read this passage and hear your comments, I think is that the sort of a thing that happens to us in Christ?*

Well, that’s an interesting take on that, Sig. I can’t help but think of Revelation 3...2 and 3 as a matter of fact, where one of the Church’s that He addresses and I believe it is Thyatira, but He says that He is going to give us all a new name known only to him who receives it. Another movie that comes to mind, I guess I’m getting off a little bit here but you started it Sig, is “The Wizard of Oz.” Remember, Oz is giving the Scarecrow the brain, and the Tin Man the heart, and the Lion courage; and he gives them...but they have “something that you haven’t got” and he gives them this reward and everything...I just wonder what it is going to be like when Christ does bestow on us that new name and whatever He is pleased to give us. Boy, we’ll be talking about this a little bit later...enemies to friends, to sons and daughters...a complete transformation. A good analogy there Sig. Very good.

SIG: *What really happens though? How do we take on the priesthood and the kingship, what does that look like?*

Brother, wait until we get to heaven and we’ll find out. {LAUGHTER}.

SIG: *But it doesn’t happen here?*

Yes, it does happen here.

SIG: *Well, that’s what I’m asking.*

Well, it happens by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are those things, we're to live it out in our daily lives obviously, but we reign with Him, He has given us stewardship in our work, in family, in whatever He has given you is kind of what Bruce says, "Be who you are." Your ministry is where you are and who you are. We exercise that kingdom and priesthood every day of our lives. It is a reality, you have no choice in the matter; He is giving you those things, He bestowed those things upon you as you are **in** Christ. I don't know if I'm answering that and if anybody else has any insight, please feel free.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Are we not doing that now as we study the Word of life itself?*

Sure.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Don't you do it when you volunteer in the Church, when you walk around and say, "hi" to people who [UNCLEAR], you do it your whole life, you have to recognize it and take ownership of it. If you want to know what it feels like, that's what those guys [UNCLEAR] and that's what happens [UNCLEAR], they took ownership of something they already had.*

And I think too, that many times we are unaware, and I think that Christ is going to point that out in the last judgment: "I was hungry, you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, you gave Me a drink" and what's the response of the believer? "When?" We don't even know, so it happened without us even knowing it. Many times we're unaware.

Now, if that weren't good enough, here are more spiritual blessings. Ephesians 2:4 through 7. Who would like to read that for us?

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved, raised up together, and made us sit together in the heaven places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

"He seated us together with Him in heavenly places." It's a done deal, Brothers. Often times we think, "I can't wait until I get to heaven, I can't wait until we're through with all this nonsense in the world," and certainly, it's a natural reaction. But, Brothers, He has seated us together—there is that "together" again—us as a body in heavenly places right now. We just need to grab hold of that to believe that, especially when the world tells us differently and our circumstances tempt us to think differently. A great thing. I haven't even scratched the surface and, as I said, everything that we're going to be studying from now on in this lesson is a spiritual blessing.

Let's go to the second one. We are predestined in love to adoption as sons, verse 5. I love the progression here. Our Lord had a lot to say about this. Jesus said, for example, first of all that we are His friend. We like to sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" but we are His friends and that is the most important thing.

Would someone read John 15:13-15?

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are my friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."

How about that? It would be wonderful enough if He took us out of the realm of being enemies, and don't forget, of course—remember that all those outside of Christ that you know in the work place or family members or around the world are at this point enemies of God...at enmity with Him and at hostility with Him. What does it say in Psalm 110:1? "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." We were enemies but now we are friends. It would be most wonderful if we were just subjects to the King, but we're friends. It's really great and we know from this gathering how wonderful close friendship in Christ can be. There is nothing like it; the world knows nothing of it. The friendship of the world is what? You scratch my back and I'll scratch your back. But true friendship in Christ is priceless; but not only that—we're His brothers.

Can someone please read Mark 3:32-35?

"And a multitude was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are outside seeking you." But He answered them saying, "Who is my mother or my brothers? And He looked around in a circle that those who sat above Him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers or whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Imagine that, we as sons of God, through Christ we are brothers to the Savior. If He hadn't said it, I wouldn't believe it. It's kind of like that passage in Zephaniah 3 where the Lord says that when He is with His people, that He is going to rejoice over us with singing. "No," I said, "I can't believe it, but it is true." Yet we are His brothers. Amazing!

And the same thing in Hebrews 2:11, 12: "For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare your name to my brethren, in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to you."

Can you believe that? There have been many times, Brothers, that I have been afraid that I have been ashamed to say the name of Christ or to proclaim Him, or not saying what I should say to an unbeliever who says something that is contrary to Christ, or whatever. Yet, He is not ashamed to call us brethren; and yet if Christ is not ashamed of us, that is a glorious, glorious, glorious thing.

And because of this, what do we do? We call God our Father; and not only do we call God our Father but we call Him Abba, that is not a rock group from the 1970s but it is a term of endearment. Galatians 4:6, could someone read that? "And because you are sons, God has sent forth His Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

"Abba" is hard to translate into English; I guess the English equivalent or proximity of it may be "Papa" or may be "Daddy." I know some people do not like that term because it sounds too flippant but it is an affectionate term. Jesus said it at Gethsemane. "Abba, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But do you realize that we have the unspeakable privilege of calling God, "Abba, Father?" As it were, yes in reverence, but sitting on His lap as it were. In the Beloved that was shocking in the first century, when Jesus said that God was His Father and that God, therefore, was our Father. What was the reaction of the Jews? They wanted to kill Him because He was making Himself equal with God and, in deed, He was. But we are His sons; He is our Father, not just our judge, no longer someone just to be afraid of. We are to fear Him in reverence and respect but now He is our Father. As I said last week to Bruce, I remember my father and he demanded respect and if

he didn't get it, I got the belt; but he also took me to my organ lessons, faithfully week after week. He also was someone that I could talk to about schoolwork or whatever.

Yes.

DON: *This all speaks to that precious personal [UNCLEAR] that we have with God our Father through Christ, His Son. It is not just an acquaintance, but a personal relationship that is full of love.*

Yes, right, exactly. There is a sense in which we do fear God in respect and awe, and the New Testament speaks of that just as much as the Old Testament; but it is not a terror, it is love. It's "Oh, Father, I want to please you not to earn anything...I can't do that...but because I love you." Wow, the ramifications of that are huge. Absolutely.

DON: *When the Pharisees would challenge Christ about being God or equating Himself with God, that was enough for them to want Him killed. Was there any reference that you know of where the Pharisees got wind of Christ referring to us as God's children or was that acceptable in the Jewish mind?*

Oh, boy. Well, I imagine that many Pharisees probably were present, or at least some Pharisees were present when Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, where He certainly gave us the Lord's Prayer. He gave constant references to our heavenly Father, our Father in heaven. We know, of course, in John 8 that He said He is the Son of God and that we are sons, and that a slave does not abide in the house of the Lord forever but a son does. So, yes, I'm sure there were many occasions and to be fair there are scriptures in the Old Testament, very few and far between. For example, I believe it's in Malachi, "Have we not one Father, has not one God made us..." But it is not the intimacy there, it is kind of like God being the Creator, we being His creatures.

Really, it was Christ Who was the first to describe this intimacy that a father has for his son. So I would say that yes, the Pharisees certainly...and even at one point they said "...we were not born of fornication..." Which, of course, was a slap in the face of Christ as implying 'you were since Mary was pregnant. But we're not. We have one Father...Abraham is our Father, God is our Father.' But certainly not in the face of intimacy. I think they certainly did get wind of Christ talking about us being children of God and in those instances, I would think so, Sig.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *In Matthew, He addresses the group where He says "My mother, my brothers, my sisters are the ones that do the will of the Father."*

Yes, and He was speaking to His disciples...it says in Matthew; it doesn't say that in Mark, but it does say that in Matthew. Good point. Yes.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Would the Pharisees have reacted or been upset with the concept of us, Christ's followers, being priests and kings? Would they have seen that from the Old Testament?*

Well, they should have seen it in Exodus 19:5-6, which Peter alludes to and almost quotes directly from implying those things that were said about God's Old Testament people, the Old Testament Church, if you will. Peter applies that to us as believers **in** Christ. So they should have seen it, but they didn't. They probably would have thought about the priesthood as being the Old Testament priesthood, which, of course, they were

very upset even in the Book of Acts; you see time and time again, where they were upset with Paul and Stephen saying those things would come to an end. So, yes, definitely.

We are adopted. Maybe there are some of you who know what it means to have adopted a child and how precious that is, or that you were adopted yourselves. We are adopted into the family of God.

Now let's go on here, not only that, but we have intimate union **with** Him. In deed, that is the subject isn't it? Union **with** Christ. I didn't put it down, it is a long passage, but Matthew 25:31-46, which I eluded to a few minutes ago where those on Christ's right hand are encouraged to enter the—"Come blessed of my Father, enter the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And then, of course, as unbelievable as it may sound, Christ gives the evidence for the fact that we were in Him by deeds that were done—by feeding the hungry, "I was hungry and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, you gave Me to drink..." etc. He said, "If you did these things to the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me." There is this unity, this identification that Christ has with His Church. So much so, that to do a good work to a fellow believer, I don't think this is talking about charity in general although we are certainly encouraged to do that, but it is talking about what believers do for one another—love one another as Bruce talks about—the one another's of scripture; but "if you do it to these, you've done it to me"

Conversely, what does it say in Acts 9:4-5? "...and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? And he said, "Who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, it is hard for you to kick against the goads." Paul had never met Christ, and Christ had already died on the cross and yet Jesus doesn't say, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting these people or my people, but why are you persecuting me?" The identification, the closeness, the unity that we have with Christ is staggering. In deed, we are His body.

Somebody read Ephesians 1:22-23, please. We are His very body. "And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Yes, the Church is His body. We just don't...I don't think we realize what a glorious truth that is...that we are His very body. Bruce talks about suffering and he says that Paul says in Colossians, that He fills up the sufferings that are lacking in Christ. Heaven forbid that we should think on the cross that Christ didn't do enough for our salvation. Of course, He did everything, but Christians still suffer, don't they? Because we fill up there is still suffering to be done because we are the body of Christ. Paul uses this analogy in Ephesians 5:30-32 referring to marriage. Again, the intimacy there. Could someone read that, please?

"For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ in the Church."

Right. Constantly in scripture...and in the Old Testament this was true too but even more so this side of the cross...where we are the Bride of Christ. He is the Bridegroom and we are the Bride...it just staggers me that He described the most intimate of possible relationships. Do you see why it grieves the Holy Spirit so much when we sin? Oh, my, it is the ultimate betrayal; we hear it every day on the news where people or high political officials or sports figures are unfaithful to their wives and we gasp in horror. But we are His Bride and He is faithful, even though many times we are not.

In His high priestly prayer, Christ prayed for this very unity. Can someone read John 17:20-23?

“I do not pray for these alone but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; and they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I in you, that they also may be one in us, and that the world may believe that you sent me. And the glory which you gave me, I have given them that they may be one, just as we are one, I in them, You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me.”

Yes, precious, precious. We could spend a whole lesson on that. We could spend twenty lessons on that and the ramifications of that. Now, is it perfect in this world? No, no it isn't, but is it a reality? Yes. We represent different churches here, do we not? Yet we are all united, those of us who are truly **in** Christ—we are all united **to** Christ and you are my brothers and, hopefully, you regard me as your brother.

It is imperfect now. Is Christ's prayer answered now? Yes, I would say it is, and the demonstration is that the churches we go to on Sunday and our meeting here on Friday morning...is it imperfect now? Yes, I would say it is. Will it be perfect in glory? Absolutely. Absolutely and we look forward to that day for sure.

I don't have much time and I want to go to number four. Because we are **in** Christ, because we are united **with** Christ as His church, His body, we have an inheritance; guaranteed by the Holy Spirit and we see that in versus 8-11 of our text in Ephesians. Now, what is the nature of this inheritance? Would someone please read 1st Peter 1:3-5?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again through living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, through an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Thank you. Incorruptible, undefiled. I like the way the NIV translates it, “an inheritance that can neither fade, spoil nor perish; kept in heaven for you.” Everything we see in this world is crumbling, changing, decaying, perishing, including our bodies; we know people who are sick, we know change is always spelled “P A I N” but we have an inheritance that will never fade away.

I believe it was Jim Elliott, the missionary for [UNCLEAR] Indians...oh man, I'm going to blow it here...who says something like, “He is no fool who shuns what he cannot gain to keep what he cannot lose.” And, boy, he is absolutely right. We live for that inheritance and we have it now, the down payment, because of the Holy Spirit. We do not have much time but Revelation 22:1-5 talks about that. Revelation 21:1-7 that we've talked about before...we will be with God, we will reign with Him forever and ever. We will have His name written on our foreheads and He will lead us to springs of life and pastures and the immense promise of that reward, of that inheritance, is just absolutely fantastic.

I just want to ask as we conclude—so what? If I may be so blunt. What does that have to say for us living now, today, April 12, 2013 in the circumstances that we're in? Well, what did Christ say that we are to do? If we are the Church of Jesus Christ, if we are united **to** Him and **with** all of these great, great benefits, then we are to love one another. We're to live as the Church of Jesus Christ and He said the most important thing was not... and I've got to be very careful because doctrine is very, very important, especially for us frozen, chosen Presbyterians...and it's good that we do, but Christ said that the world will not know us by that, but by love that

we have for one another. I see that demonstrated here; hopefully, it's demonstrated in all of our individual churches that we go to. I can see a brother in Christ and meet him for the first time and there is that bond that we have that the world cannot explain or even know, and we are to minister to one another, to love one another in many, many ways.

Also, we must not look to ourselves, we must not look to the world scene such as whether it be North Korea or corrupt politicians. We must not look to the circumstances in our lives that get us down so much of the time and drag us down; whether problems at work, or health problems, or whatever, or even the sin that so easily entangles us. We must not look to Washington and the government, but we must look to Christ and to Christ alone, our Head, as Hebrews 12 says, "The author and finisher of our faith." The Captain of our salvation—He has it all under control. He has it all figured out and we are to "set our affections on things above." That's what it means to abide **in** Christ, which Bruce has been talking about, and what we will continue to talk about. We abide **in** Him—the means of grace, the Word, sacraments, that is the term that at least some of us use; fellowship with fellow Christians; prayer. All of these things are means by which we can get to know Him better and better, and realize these great truths that we have.

I would ask you, Brothers, to ponder these things; we need to meditate upon these things. I like what Bruce said a few weeks ago and last week—to be comfortable in Christ's presence, that union that we have and we can be comfortable in His presence. That we can be at home with Him, and that is a blessed thing until we have that eternal home forever.

Let us pray.

Father in heaven, thank You for this time that we've had together. It is such a joy to be here on Friday with fellow brothers in Christ and to be, Father, a part of our individual churches where, hopefully, these things are being taught. Oh, Lord, we just ask You to fill us with Your Holy Spirit, to help us, Father, to know You and love You more, and more, and more, to abide in you, to realize these great truths and what it means to be **in** union **with** You as Your Church, whom You have bought with Your Own precious blood Lord Jesus. We thank You for that. I pray for each one of us here, Lord, that You would fill us with Your Holy Spirit; and if there be any here today who do not know you, Father, may this be the day of salvation. Father, we thank You and praise You in Jesus name and all the Brave Men said, "Amen."