



World Christian Fellowship

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Galatians

Lesson 42-Being in Christ and Christ in us - Sanctification

Galatians 4:19-20, *My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.*

Justification: As a believer, Christ is in you; but that's the reality of redemption or salvation in its first phase. On your new birth or being born again Christ comes and takes up residence in you in an undeveloped way, fully present, but not fully manifest through the believer.

Sanctification is the process by which the believer in whom Christ dwells becomes more like Christ. Christ begins to shape the believer's life.

A fully formed Christ in the life of a believer is,

- ✓ manifests the character of Christ,
- ✓ thinks the way Christ thinks,
- ✓ speaks the way Christ speaks, and
- ✓ acts the way Christ acts.

Apostle Paul's great painful desire for his people, and for any faithful pastor, to see Christ fully formed in those who are in His care.

- The church does show some interest in the great doctrine of election.
- The church does show interest in the doctrine of redemption or justification.
- The church has a small interest in glorification.

But the church has the least interest in the doctrine which is the most important one for the church, and that is the doctrine of sanctification, becoming like Christ.

The doctrine of sanctification would literally evacuate many so-called churches. Any real interest in godliness and holiness would send people out the back door who came in the front door on false pretenses.

What goes in the life of a true believer between justification and glorification is sanctification. It is the work of the Spirit of God separating the believer from sin, and it is a process that goes on all our lifelong.

It is not enough that people are justified. It is not enough that they have come to salvation that they have come to know Christ; their sins are forgiven.

Apostle Paul's passion himself: "I press toward the mark."

What is the mark?

Christlikeness.

That should be the passion of every believer, pastor and leaders.

A faithful pastor must be saying,

- ✓ I want to be like Christ.
- ✓ I want to be more like Christ.
- ✓ I want to be increasingly like Christ.
- ✓ I want to always think and speak and act and relate to life and to people the way Christ would.

That is the Christian life.

Being in Christ and having Christ in us.

We understand that if we are believers, Christ is in us.

We also understand that the New Testament says, "We are in Christ."

This is simply defining both ways of this union.

We are in Him; He is in us.

We are engulfed in one another in an inseparable union.

The Son of God, not as an infant as He was in the womb of Mary, but the Son of God in His full presence indwells every true believer.

Colossians 3:11, “Christ is all, and in all.”

1 Corinthians 3:16, “You are the temple of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:19, “You’re the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all indwell every true believer.

Ephesians 3:20, *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,*

The presence of God brings along the power of God. The presence of God, and the power of God, sufficient for your increasing sanctification.

When we think about a Christian, we think about someone,

- who believes in God,
- who believes in Christ,
- who believes in the Spirit of God.

But the language of Scripture is far more intimate and personal. It is not simply something that we believe, it is someone who lives in us.

Not in partial representation but living in the believer in complete fullness.

- The true Christian is the dwelling place of God.
- We are the temple.
- We are the Holy of Holies.

Paul's prayer for the believer is that Christ who is in us would become fully formed, that there would be no limit to the expression of Christ in His fullness that comes through our lives.

The doctrine of election: God planned redemption and chose who He would save before the foundation of the world.

The doctrine of justification: the act of God by which He imputes the righteousness of Christ to a believing sinner, and that sinner is permanently justified, fully forgiven, and promised heaven.

The doctrine of glorification: a future event that occurs as well in a moment, when God takes the believer into glory and that believer is then forever perfected.

So, we have the act of God in,

- election in eternity past,
- justification in time present, and
- glorification in the future.

In between justification and glorification is this long process that lasts our entire lives called sanctification. The process of being increasingly separated from sin and made more like Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt about the election of God, nor the justification of God, nor the glorification of God, there need be no doubt about the sanctifying work of God. God is doing that work in every true believer.

In every true believer, sanctifying work is the work of God that is going on.

- ✓ It is going on by means of the Word.
- ✓ It is going on by means of prayer.
- ✓ It is going on by means of fellowship.
- ✓ It is going on by means of worship.

All the means of grace are contributing to the work of the Spirit in the increasing holiness and godliness and Christlikeness of a true believer.

Last lesson we finished with **2 Corinthians 3:18**, *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

In the Old Testament the veil was on.

What was revealed in the Old Testament was veiled.

- It was shadowy.
- It wasn't full.
- It wasn't complete.

That was illustrated even in Moses' experience on the mountain.

In the New Testament the veil is off, and we now look in a mirror.

Now we are not seeing shadows, but we look at the New Testament with clarity. The New Testament reveals the glory of the Lord in full clarity.

As we gaze at the glory of the Lord, seeing His glory revealed on the pages of the New Testament, we are being transformed into the same image. The same glory from one level of glory to the next.

We go from glory, becoming increasingly more conformed to the glory of Christ.

This is the work of the Lord the Spirit. That is how sanctification works. We look at the glory of Christ. We see that glory; we are changed into that very glory by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Look at the prayer of Paul in Ephesians 1.

Ephesians 1:14-23, *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.* ¹⁵ *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,* ¹⁶ *do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of*

you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Paul praying that

- I want you to know the Lord better.
- I want the revelation,
- I want you to have the wisdom that comes from God the Father, concerning the Son to become ever-increasingly clear to you.
- I want you to know Christ better.

What is the church?

It is the body of Christ filled with fullness God.

Paul wants the church to be filled with the fullness of God.

They would be given,

- spirit of wisdom,
- revelation in the knowledge of Him,
- eyes of their heart would be enlightened,
- they would understand,
- they would understand His presence,
- they would understand His power, and
- They would experience His fullness.

Why this prayer?

The testimony of the church is at stake.

The criticism that comes against Christianity, superficial Christianity, against churches with superficial Christians is legitimate, because there's no real corporate manifestation of the fullness of Christ. This is the cry of every true pastor.

2 Peter 1-3, *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*

Look at this phrase, "that you might become partakers of the divine nature,"

Peter is saying that you might more manifestly and fully share in the indwelling divine nature.

Christ in us, God the Father in us, the Holy Spirit in us. We in God, and we in Christ, and we in the Spirit.

It goes both ways.

- ✓ The Father in us, and we in the Father.
- ✓ Christ in us, and we in Him;
- ✓ The Spirit in us, and we in the Spirit.

Why this two-sided emphasis?

To show this union in its most powerful way.

About seventy times in the New Testament it says in some way, "We are in Christ."

Also, it says, "Christ is in us."

Colossians 3:4, *"Christ, who is our life."*

1 John 5:20, *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

If you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you received eternal life.

So, when we talk about our eternal life we are talking about Christ. He is that eternal life.

John 14:6, *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

The possession of eternal life is the same as the possession of Christ.

You have eternal life because you have the eternal living Christ, the eternal living God in you.

Scripture makes it clear that our union with Christ is pervasive from eternity to eternity.

Ephesians 1:3, *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,*

All spiritual heavenly blessing comes to us in Christ. When you are in Christ and Christ is in you, the entire display of heavenly spiritual blessing is available to you. It's all yours in Christ.

When did it start?

It started when you were chosen before the foundation of the world. The doctrine of election.

Ephesians 1:4, *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

That means that before God had created anything, when all that existed was the triune God and there was no creation, in the

mind of God He had already identified those who He would place in union with His Son.

- When God was putting together in His mind the plan in that timeless eternity,
- Even before the creation of the universe,
- Even before the creation of those who occupy the universe,
- Even before the creation of angelic beings,

The people whom God would bring to eternal glory in His mind when He made the plan. In God's mind at that very moment they were in Christ.

The elects were in Christ.

- God had His elect in His infinite, eternal mind.
- When God designed the plan to save them, He would save them in His Son.
- God set His love on them.
- God knew who they were.
- God wrote their names in a book.
- God set in motion the plan to bring those who in His eternal mind were chosen to be in His Son to the fulfillment of that through their redemption and their glorification.

The truth of election established the union of the Savior with believers. You were joined to Him in the mind of God in eternity past before anything was ever created.

Ephesians 1:5, *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

He predestined, He chose before the foundation of the world those who were to be in Christ as His sons, who would be receiving the eternal blessing of union with Christ forever in His presence.

All the elect were present

- ✓ in the mind of God
- ✓ the mind of the Son and
- ✓ the mind of the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ When the plan of redemption was laid out all of them were in the mind of God.
- ✓ When the plan of redemption was executed and accomplished in history elect were in the mind of God.
- ✓ When Jesus lived His holy life, He knew exactly for whom He was living it.
- ✓ When Jesus died His substitutionary death, He knew exactly for whom He was dying.
- ✓ When Jesus rose, He knew exactly for whom He was rising. When Jesus ascended, He knew exactly for whom He was ascending.
- ✓ When Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father, He knew exactly who was to be seated with Him on His throne.

The divinely ordained bond of union between the Redeemer and those He redeemed was established in eternity past and worked out in redemptive history.

The benefits of the work of redemption are secured for those who were placed into union with Christ in the mind of God before the world began.

So, we were in Christ, in God's mind in eternity past.

Ephesians 1:7-8, *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,*

The work of redemption. In Christ we have redemption.

- We were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world;
- We were redeemed in Him.

Literally, our redemption took place in Him.

In Christ life our redemption was being accomplished. God considered the elect to be in union with Christ.

In redemption we are given the righteousness of Christ through faith, not our own righteousness.

Therefore, every righteous act that Christ ever did, we did in Him.

- When He was a child, teenager, adult, throughout His life and ministry,
- When life was oppressive,
- When He was rejected, and
- When He was mistreated,

Christ was perfectly righteous and obedient to the Father.

In every act of

- ❖ righteousness,
- ❖ thought of righteousness,
- ❖ every virtue,
- ❖ every expression of His perfect holiness,

We were in Christ and it was for us that this would be credited.

In Him we have redemption. We are united to Him in His life of perfect obedience. Every act, every word, every thought that was perfect, He knew for whom that perfection would be given as a gift.

Galatians 3:27, *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

1 Corinthians 1:30, *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*

We were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

When He came into the world in His incarnation, we were in Him in every act of obedience.

- We were in Him in every righteous thought, word, and deed.
 - We were united to Him in His perfect obedience,
 - We were united to Him in His perfect righteousness,
 - We were united to Him in His death.
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- ✓ The Father considers the elect to have lived Christ's life, and
 - ✓ The Father considers the elect to have died Christ's death.
 - ✓ The Father considers the elect have risen with Christ.

Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

1 Peter 2:24, *“He Himself bore our sin in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.”*

Christ had no sin, but He was paying the penalty for our sins. We lived in Him and we died in Him. The most central reality of our union with the Son of God is this atonement.

This is the most central reality by which God, on the one hand, inflicted undeserved suffering on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then bestowed undeserved blessing on sinners.

The Lord Jesus was so treated other than He deserved, in order that sinners could be treated other than they deserve.

The undeserved suffering of the one in God's eyes became the sufficient ground for the unmerited blessing of the other.

God saw us in His living and saw us in His dying.

We died with Christ.

Romans 6:8, "If we have died with Christ, we believe we'll also live with Him."

Colossians 2: 20, "You have died with Christ."

Colossians 3:3, "You've died; your life is hidden with Christ in God."

2 Timothy 2:11, "If we died with Him, we'll live with Him."

Romans 6:6, "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him."

We died with Him.

We were buried with Him.

Romans 6:4, "We've been buried with Him."

Colossians 2:12, "having been buried with Him."

We were in Christ in eternity past. We were in Christ in the living of His life and in the dying of His death. We were in Christ when He was buried.

We were raised with Him.

Colossians 2:12, *“You also were raised with Him.”*

Colossians 3:1, *“You’ve been raised up with Christ.”*

Ephesians 2:6, *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

Understand the breadth and length and height and depth of this incredible reality.

- ✓ His life is our life.
- ✓ His punishment is our punishment.
- ✓ His death is our death.
- ✓ His burial is our burial.
- ✓ His resurrection is our resurrection.
- ✓ His ascension is our ascension.
- ✓ His exaltation is our exaltation.

Summary: “We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.”

When all this redemptive work was done, we weren’t alive. We weren’t even around. But God knew who we were and, in His mind, placed us in union with His Son and our Savior, not

only at the time He planned redemption, but through its entire accomplishment.

The Lord Jesus did not live and die and rise and ascend to the throne for an unknown group.

He did it for those chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. We were on His heart through it all.

- ❖ We were there in the planning.
- ❖ We were there in the accomplishment.
- ❖ We are there in the application.
- ❖ We are there.

Ephesians 2:5-7, *even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

We were there. Every step that Christ took we were there.

Now we are in Christ, and Christ is in us.

That's what defines us.

The doctrine of the indwelling union between the believer and Christ has become to us sanctification.

How can you live your life any other way than to give Him glory?

You have been connected to Him from eternity past and throughout His life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and now His intercession and future exaltation.

It is all about YOU.

You have been on His heart, in His mind, along with every other believer.

That has tremendous implications about how you live.

You are not your own, you have been bought with a price.

You are the temple of God.

Ephesians 4:15, *but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ*

You need to keep increasing, grow into Christlikeness.

What is the motivation?

The union you have with Him and you have had it eternally.

1 Thessalonians 4:16, *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*

You will always be in Christ.

When your body's lying in a grave, your spirit will be with the Lord. Your body will be in the grave decaying until the time the Lord comes to raise believers.

Even your body lying there is dead in Christ. That's the dead in Christ who will one day rise.

When we rise

1 Corinthians 15:22, *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

Our bodies will be made alive in Christ. We have been in Christ since before the foundation of the world and we always will be.

How did we receive this gift?

By faith!

That is what Paul's been saying all through Galatians.

Not by works.

This didn't happen to you by works, this happened to you by faith, and faith alone.

Election, we were in Him.

Redemption, we were in Him, and

Sanctification, we are jointed to Him

Galatians 2:20, *“Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”*

This is sanctification.

- I live for Christ.
- I desire to see Christ formed in me.
- I desire the fullness of God, to be filled with all the fullness of God.
- I desire to grow up in Him.

So, union with Christ can be summed up: legal, vital, spiritual, and permanent.

Conclusion:

What does it mean to be a Christian?

You may say, that a Christian is someone who has an unusual commitment to Jesus.”

That’s true, but that’s not really the way to define a Christian.

Someone may say, that I am a Christian because I have a mission connection with Jesus Christ.

We can hear people say that I like Jesus attitude toward the poor, the downcast, the depressed and the outcasts. So, if you’re going to call yourself a Christian you have got to feed the poor, and you have got to take care of those that have trouble.

Someone else may say that because I have a moral relation to Jesus. I connect with Him morally.

There are people who think that they are they have gone to the Mass or church service. They have gone through infant baptism or a confirmation or some other baptism, and they go through certain rituals, and they are Christians because of some sacramental identity.

Someone may say that they are Christians because they have a religious connection to Jesus. They are not Muslims.

What is the right answer?

Jesus Christ is my life. I am His, He is mine. He lives in me; I live in Him.

We are joined together in a union that began in the mind of God in eternity past before anything was ever created and will consummate in eternal glory in the world to come when I will be united with my Savior in perfection.

I will be made as much like Him, as a glorified human can be like Him, forever.

My Christianity is simply defined as being in Christ and having Christ in me. He lives in me: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the whole Trinity.

1 John 4:15, *And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

1 Thessalonian 1:1, *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now the prayer is that Christ would be fully formed in you. He is there, but you need to be filled with all the fullness.

2 Peter 1:3-7, *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*

Divine power comes in the form of the divine person living in you. You now have become a partaker of the divine nature.

Do you want to know what your part is in sanctification?

- ✓ Become diligent,
- ✓ Moral excellence,
- ✓ Sound knowledge of the truth,
- ✓ Self-control,
- ✓ Perseverance,
- ✓ Godliness,
- ✓ Brotherly kindness, and
- ✓ Love.

If these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How do you know if you are elect?

It's in your hands to be certain about it, as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble over that issue.

Look at your life.

If you are indifferent toward holiness, then you are blind and short-sighted. Sovereign election in Christ before the foundation of the world yet our responsibility is to make certain of that calling and choosing.

How do we do that?

By adding these virtues and seeing them increase in our life.

2 Peter 1:11, *for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

True believers are in the process of being sanctified. And you want to make sure you are being sanctified, and it takes diligence.

As long as you practice these things you are never going to wonder whether you were chosen.

May Christ be formed in you.

May you be filled with all the fullness of God.