



Seated with Christ in the Heavenly Places

Ascension Sunday

Ephesians 2:1-7

David Sunday

May 20, 2012

God, I pray that You would speak through me, through Your Word and by Your Spirit so we would be transformed by the Word; so our faith would be lifted up to the throne of grace where Christ is and where we dwell with Him. That we will be strengthened so we can live in this world as heavenly citizens and bring the life of heaven to bear upon our daily lives here on earth. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 2. We're taking a two-week break from our reading through the Bible series where we have been in the Old Testament a lot. This week and next I want to focus on the New Testament letter of Ephesians in order to highlight two of the pivotal events in the history of redemption—events that we sometimes overlook: The ascension of Christ and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This is Ascension Sunday and next week is Pentecost.

I think Ephesians 2:1-7, particularly verse six, is one of the clearest verses in the New Testament describing the effect that Christ's ascension has on those who believe in Him. So let's worship God now as we listen to the reading of His Word beginning with Ephesians 2:1. Hear the Word of the living God:

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the 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—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Praise God for His living Word!

Do you still believe in miracles today? Do you believe God is still doing miraculous works? I do and I want to tell you about one that happened recently in the life of our church. I got a phone call on the Tuesday after Easter from Tim Holloway. He said, “David, I want to tell you some very good news. Juan Luna was saved last night.” I tell you this story with Juan’s permission—he’s here this morning. I rejoice so much to hear this news because now a husband and a wife together are united in faith in Jesus. Back in the fall, as Tim’s wife Verlene shared the gospel with Erika, God opened her eyes and she repented and put her faith in Jesus. She began coming to the Women’s Bible Study here and then their children and Juan started coming to church. God has been speaking to Juan and working in his heart. On that Monday night after Easter, Juan went over to Tim’s house and put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s a wonderful miracle of mercy.

What God did for Juan is the same thing God has done for everyone who trusts in Jesus. It’s the same thing God can do in your life today. It’s described for us here in Ephesians 2. I remember that very week, Juan came to Exploring Christianity and said with joy and humility, “I gave my heart to Jesus this week.”

What is described here in Ephesians 2 is what happened behind the scenes—what God was going to do in Juan’s heart; what God was going to work in our hearts so we could believe. Look at what it says about us. We were dead (verse one), but God (verse five) made us alive together with Christ. That’s a miracle.

Monday night, April 9th, Jesus Christ came into Juan’s life with His resurrection power and gave him a life that will never die—eternal life. The resurrection life of Jesus filled him. Verse two says we were enslaved to *“the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...”* That is what we were, but verse six says God *“raised us up with him [Christ].”* He liberated us from our bondage to sin, our flesh, hell, Satan and to this world—He set us free. He raised us up together with Christ and verse six says He *“seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* He gave us a home in heaven and He seated us there.

Then verse three says we *“were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”* We were destined for judgment but instead of judgment the miracle of mercy came into our lives and verse seven describes it like this: At the moment we trusted in Jesus, He began to open the floodgates of His mercy and pour out *“the immeasurable riches*

of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” And He will do that for all eternity—He will continually pour out His grace and kindness.

This I say, friends, is a miracle. It’s a miracle when God takes us from who we were apart from Jesus and makes us alive together with Christ and lifts us up and raises us with Him. God can do that for you. God has done that for all of us who trust in Jesus. That’s why we sing...

God of grace amazing wonder
Irresistible and free
Oh the miracle of mercy
Jesus reaches down to me...

(God of Grace by Keith Getty & Jonathan Rea)

The Miracle of His Mercy

Just remember who we were—the way we were—before the miracle of mercy reached us. That’s verses one through three. Then in verses four through seven, we’re going to look at the magnificence of that miracle of mercy and just marvel at it together. Then we’re going to hone in especially on verse six on this Ascension Sunday.

But let’s review for a minute the way we were before the miracle of mercy. We need to understand the gravity of our condition so we can delight in the riches of God’s deliverance—the riches of God’s salvation. John Piper says, “In the Christian life it’s cherish or perish.” You either cherish what God has done for you in Christ and stand amazed at what God has done for you—or you perish. The only way we can cherish what God has done for us in Christ is to realize first of all how much we needed a Savior.

So verses one through three show us what we were like apart from God’s mercy. The picture is bleak—couldn’t be any bleaker. There are three reasons we needed the miracle of mercy:

1. We were born dead (verse one)
2. We were enslaved (verse two)
3. We were condemned (verse three)

What is a person apart from Christ? Verse one says, dead. Dead in trespasses and sins. Trespasses and sins speak of the fullness and variety of our sinful past. *“The wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23). There is a physical death, yes; but also a spiritual death

forever in hell. It begins right now with spiritual death so that a person who is outside of Christ is insensible—like a dead person in a coffin—to the things of God. The beauty of God’s holiness does not attract us. The marvel of God’s grace does not seem sweet to us. As we sing in one of our hymns:

I was blinded by my sin
Had no ears to hear Your voice
Did not know Your love within
Had no taste for heaven’s joys
Then Your Spirit gave me life
Opened up Your Word to me
Through the gospel of Your Son
Gave me endless hope and peace

(O Great God by Bob Kaufflin)

You see, that’s who we are apart from Christ. We are the walking dead. We do not fear God’s judgment. We do not marvel at God’s grace. We do not respond to God’s Word. A life without God, no matter how physically fit and mentally alert it may be, is a living death. We don’t need resuscitation, we need resurrection. We need to be made alive.

We were dead and enslaved in three-fold chains:

1. We were enslaved to *“the course of this world”* (verse two) – our atmosphere controlled us. We were under powerful influences—society’s values, habits, attitudes which stand in stark opposition to God. We weren’t free. We were trying to blend in with the world around us—doing just what the world dictated.
2. Furthermore, we *“were following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”* (verse two). So we thought sin meant freedom. We thought sin meant doing it my way. The truth is we were actually under bondage to an evil, supernatural spirit—a real devil who is at work in the world today, blinding people from seeing the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The supernatural forces of evil were holding us under their control—under their influence—so that we could not see God’s glory.
3. Furthermore, we were enslaved by *“the passions of our flesh”* (verse three). We were *“the sons of disobedience”* (verse two). We all were like this. We all once lived in the passions of our flesh and what that looked like was that whatever our sinful, selfless hearts told us to do our hearts did. We were under the control of our sinful nature. We were, it says, *“carrying out the desires of the body and the mind...”* So our wills were in bondage to our sinful nature. We desperately needed to be rescued but we had no desire to be rescued.

We were dead. We were enslaved. And finally, we were condemned. We were all carrying out the desires of the body and mind *“and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind”* (verse three). Because God is good and holy and true, He hates all that is evil and unholy and false. Because God is righteous He has a righteous antagonism toward evil and because we were enslaved to sin—enslaved to the devil and the course of this world, dead in our trespasses and sins—we fell under God’s wrath. We fell under His just wrath—we were sentenced to condemnation. That’s the gravity of our position. That’s who we were without the miracle of mercy. That’s how people are born into the world. This is our condition apart from Jesus. It’s desperate.

Think of the worst thing you can imagine happening to you—being taken captive as a hostage by terrorists or being cast adrift at sea with no fresh water to sustain you, or having your body ravaged by cancer—none of these can compare to the gravity of the situation that is described in verses one through three. Here we find a disease deadlier than cancer, bondage more terrifying than war and a fate worse than death. To be subject to the wrath of God, to be destined to judgment, to be dead in sins and not alive in order to make myself responsive to the things of God—that’s desperate. That’s terrifying. That’s what we were.

But God—verse four. But God...but God. You see, in the original language there hasn’t been a subject or a main verb yet. This is our condition but there’s no subject. Then these words in verse four leap off the page like a bolt of lightning. There hasn’t been anyone who could come and deliver us from our plight but now Paul introduces the main subject of this lengthy passage—God is the subject. The main point of Ephesians 2:1-7 is not man and his misery, it is God in His mercy. But God. These words bring hope into our hopelessness. They introduce us to the miracle of mercy—something that is utterly unexpected, unanticipated, unasked for and undeserved. But God. But God did something magnificent.

The Magnificence of His Mercy

So let’s move from who we were before the miracle of mercy and explore the magnificence of that miracle in verses four through seven. We were dead in our trespasses and sins (verse one). Look at what God did (verse five)—He *“made us alive together with Christ.”* That’s the main verb of the whole passage. He made us alive! We were dead and He made us alive. We were enslaved to the world, to our sin, to the devil himself (verse

two). But what did God do about that enslavement? He raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him.

Think of the Navy Seals in their Blackhawk helicopters going into enemy territory to free hostages. They come down with all their power and might. They swoop down into the enemy stronghold. They rescue those who are in bondage, lifting them out of there and bringing them home to freedom. Maybe they even get to go to the White House and have the President himself welcome them home.

That's what God did. He *"raised us up with [Christ] and seated us with Him in the heavenly places."* We were destined for and deserving of eternal wrath but God (verse seven) decided to show us *"the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."* It was God's intention that He would put on a grand fireworks extravaganza of mercy and grace for all eternity. God desired to display the grace He has shown us—His kindness toward us in Christ—and He wants to make us the center attraction of that display. For all eternity, God is going to be saying to us, "Look at the kindness I've shown you. Look at the grace you've received." It's going to take all eternity for us to explore all of what God has done for us in Christ. We are not going to be able to understand until all the ages of eternity have passed—which will be never—how *"worthy is the Lamb who was slain"*, how rich is God's mercy and grace and kindness, how lavish He's been toward us. That's what God has done for us. Every aspect of our sinful condition has been more than sufficiently overcome by His marvelous grace.

So Paul summarized twice (verses five and eight) by saying, *"By grace you have been saved."* He makes it very clear in verse eight that this is not of your own doing. You couldn't have done this for yourself. God did this. It was a miracle of mercy. *"It is the gift of God, not the result of works"* (2:9). Believers need to have that phrase underlined over and over again, *"not a result of works."* It's the gift of God *"so that no one may boast."*

Why did God do this for us? Verse four makes it very clear: *"because of the great love with which He loved us."* Great love. Paul says, "The Father came with the Son and looked over the battlefield of sin. He saw rotting corpses. He smelled the stench of our rebellion. And the Father said to the Son, 'Son, I so love this world—this wicked, rotting world—that I want to send You into the world so I will not condemn the world but that through You the world might be saved (John 3:17). In return the Son said to the Father, "I love them too and I will lay down my life for them, rescue them and deliver them because of this great love."

That's what moved the heart of God. It wasn't because of anything lovely in us. It was because of His great love that He came to our corpse—dead in sin—and made us alive. It was because of His great love that He came to us in our bondage, in our willful bondage and our sinfulness. God said, "I'm going to set you free. I'm going to show you what true freedom is." It was because of His great love that He turned away His wrath by pouring it out on His Son and instead made us the objects of His kindness forever. That great love would not let God look at us in scorn and derision—instead He became rich in mercy. His love moved His rich heart of mercy and He poured that mercy out on us in kindness through Christ Jesus. And He will do so for all eternity. That's the magnificence of God's mercy.

How has He done it? I want you to notice one more phrase that keeps popping up beginning in verse five. How the miracle of mercy reached down and touched us. Notice in verse five the phrase, He *"made us alive together **with Christ...**"* Then again in verse six, He *"raised us up **with him** and seated us **with him** in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us **in Christ Jesus.**"* Do you hear that emphasis? Paul is highlighting the glorious doctrine of a believer's union with Jesus Christ.

Very simply put, what that doctrine means is that whatever God has accomplished ***in*** Christ, He has also accomplished for those who believe ***in*** Christ—for those who are ***in*** Christ.

- So when God became a man, He united Himself to our humanity so we could be united to Him.
- When Jesus lived the perfect life that we failed to live, He did so in order to represent us as our righteous substitute.
- When Jesus died on the cross, He died so we might die to sin.
- When He was raised from the dead, He was raised so we might be made alive together with Him.
- And when He ascended to the right hand of the Father where He sits and reigns forever and ever, He ascended so we might be lifted from the depths of hell to the heights of God's throne. So that we might be seated there in God's presence with Him, sharing in His authority over sin and death and hell.

That's the doctrine of the believer's union with Christ.

I want to read you a passage from John Calvin that describes what this means for us. This living, lasting, loving union that we have with Christ and in Christ because these are probably the most important words in Paul's whole theology—in Christ. In Him. They're

not throw away words—they are at the heart of what the gospel is all about for the Apostle Paul. So listen to the way John Calvin describes it:

“If we seek strength, it lies in His dominion; if purity, in His conception; if gentleness, it appears in His birth. For by His birth He was made like us in all respects (Hebrews 2:17) that He might learn to feel our pain (Hebrews 5:2). If we seek redemption, it lies in His passion; if acquittal, in His condemnation; if remission of the curse, in His cross (Galatians 3:13); if satisfaction, in His sacrifice; if purification, in His blood; if reconciliation, in His descent into hell; if mortification of the flesh, in His tomb; if newness of life, in His resurrection; if immortality, in the same; if inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom, in His entrance into heaven; if protection, if security, if abundant supply of all blessings, in His Kingdom; if untroubled expectation of judgment, in the power given to Him to judge. In short, since rich store of every kind of good abounds in Him, let us drink our fill from this fountain and from no other.”

(Institutes of the Christian Religion, p. 527-28).

Let us continually go to Christ and drink our fill from Him. Let us set our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and we are seated there with Him. Let us draw our spiritual strength and nourishment from Him continuously for...

- He is the Vine; we are the branches.
- He is the Bridegroom; we are the bride.
- He is the Chief Cornerstone; we are the building.
- He is the Head; we are the body.

We are vitally connected to Jesus, that’s why we sing, “In Christ alone my hope is found.” It’s through our union with Christ that we gain resurrection out of our death. It’s through our union with Christ in His ascension that we gain authority and power over sin and death and hell.

Crescendo of the Miracle of Mercy

I want to conclude this message by putting the spotlight on verse six. I think this whole doctrine of union with Christ is something we see dimly. If we see it at all, we see it very dimly. We need to fix our attention on verse six. We need to chew on it and ponder it. Even now, ask the Holy Spirit, “Open my eyes to see something of the beauty, glory, wonder, truth and power of what’s being expressed here in verse six.”

Because this verse brings us to our union with Christ and His ascension and reign at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, I'd like to call this last section the crescendo of the miracle of mercy. If verses one through three show us who we were before the miracle of mercy and verses four through seven describe the magnificence of that miracle, I think verse six is the grand crescendo—the high point. He *“raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”*

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says of this verse, “There is no more wonderful statement about the Christian believer anywhere than this phrase.” This is the supreme truth of all. This is the highest glory. This is the most priceless thing that is true of us as God’s people. I really hesitate to say anything about it because it’s so glorious and I fear that my feeble words will fail to even begin to do justice to what God is saying here.

Notice Paul says we are seated together with Christ in the heavenly places right now. At this moment, we are in that position. Verse six isn’t something we’re called to strive for over time. This isn’t speaking about something that’s just going to happen in the future. This is speaking about everyone who is united to Christ right now. You’re here in New Covenant Bible Church in 2012 but if you’re in Christ, you have another zip code which is in heaven and you’re with Christ there.

Where is Jesus right now? He is at the right hand of the Father—that’s what we celebrate on Ascension Sunday and that’s what we celebrate every day of the Christian year. He is at God’s right hand. He is exalted—highly exalted. We see this in Ephesians 1 in Paul’s wonderful prayer where he asks God the Father to give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation that we may know Him. He prays in verses 19-20 that we would know this: *“...what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places...”*

Paul is saying you need to know this power. You need to have your eyes open so you understand the power that God exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and when He ascended to the right hand of the Father and seated Him in the heavenly places. There’s something about this truth that you need to have exercising a compelling influence over your life right now. If you’re going to live the Christian life, you need to understand something about that reign of Christ at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly places.

Where is He right now? Verse 21 says Jesus is *“far above all rule and authority and power and dominion...”* Jesus is above the devil. Jesus is on the throne and He’s got His

foot on the serpent's head and He's pushing that serpent down. Jesus is on the throne and He's got a golden chain tied to the neck of the roaring lion—He's above that evil power. He's far above it. He's far above the rule of sin. *"For the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23) and Jesus paid those wages in full and freed us from the dominion of sin. He's far above the rulers of this world and all the political turmoil—He shall reign forever and ever and His kingdom shall have no end (Luke 1:33). His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom (Psalm 145:13; Daniel 4:3, 34). His dominion is an everlasting dominion and *"He is above every name that is named"* it says in Ephesians 1:21. There is no authority in all the universe that is over Jesus Christ. He is the Chief Executive of the universe. He is the One to Whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, "You are the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 14:11).

He's above every name that is named and thank God for this last phrase in verse 21: *"...not only in this age but also in the one to come."* In other words, this is going to be true for all eternity. He's the eternal, sovereign Lord. Look at verses 22-23, God *"put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."*

Let me read one more passage. Hebrews 1:3-4 says, *"...After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs."* None of the high priests in the Old Testament could sit down in the Holy of Holies. Jesus sat down because He completely purified us from our sins. His work was finished.

Just like a mother after working all day finally has everything cleaned up in the kitchen and sits down at night. Her work is finished. Jesus' work is finished. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He rests from His labors. He rejoices in His victory. And Paul says, we're seated there with Him. Not in the future but right now. We're raised up with Him. We're seated in the heavenly places. Sin no longer has any claim on Christ—if we're in Christ, it has no claim on us. Satan has no power over Christ—if we're in Christ, we don't need to be afraid of Satan but he is afraid of us. We resist the devil and he will flee from us (James 4:7). The world has no authority over Jesus and if we're in Christ, the world has no authority over us. So we are with Jesus, seated with Him in glory.

Let me trace some of the implications of what this means for our lives here and now.

1. Right now we enjoy a state of purity, exaltation and favor with God. Our salvation in Christ is so complete that God has already given us a chair there in the throne room of heaven. God's already enthroned us with Christ in heaven. In Christ, we

are pure and exalted and under God's favor—no longer under God's wrath. We've been raised up with Christ.

2. Right now we who are in Christ are citizens of heaven with all the rights, privileges, values, customs and responsibilities of heaven belonging to us. Our hearts are in heaven. Our affections are drawn from heaven. Tony Bennett might have left his heart in San Francisco but when we are in Christ, God lifts our hearts to heaven and brings us under the control of heavenly influences. Our hearts are captivated by the glories of that heavenly city. Our affections are drawn there. We have heavenly tastes, heavenly appetites. We are aliens and strangers here. We are not here on earth to live according to the course of this world. We are not driven by the values of this world. We're not here just waiting for this world to be done with either. We are here in the world that God created as a good world and the world that God's going to renew as a New Heaven and a New Earth and it's our call now to reflect the life of heaven here in this world. We're like prototypes of the New Heaven and New Earth. We're prototypes—we're citizens of the New Heaven and New Earth living here in this fallen world to reflect God's will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). That's where our hearts are—we are citizens of heaven.
3. Right now we are no longer enslaved to the king of darkness, to the passions of our flesh. If you're in Christ, your chains are gone, you've been set free. You're now under the gracious rule of your heavenly King. The reason verses two and three are no longer true of you is because Christ has ascended to the right hand of the Father and He has all authority over sin, death and the devil. So you're not down here hopelessly and helplessly trying to make something work. You are in Christ Who has done it all. You are free.

What difference would it make if this truth penetrated our hearts and minds more? How do we get it to penetrate our hearts and minds more? When the passions of our flesh are waging war against our souls, what if we said by faith, "I am seated with Christ in the heavenly places right now. That's where I belong" Then when something pops up on the internet that you know you shouldn't be looking at, you know you're with Him there.

Have you ever noticed that when someone else in the room, you're not inclined to look at things you shouldn't be looking at because someone else is there. What if you thought, "I'm with Jesus right now. I'm raised up in glory right now. How can I pollute my mind with this filth, with this stench from my former captivity? He's set me free."

Have you ever noticed when you're in the middle of a fight or argument at home and the doorbell rings, suddenly everyone is all sweet and nice. The whole climate changes. What if we lived in this climate more? Seated with Christ, raised with Him in the heavenly

places. What if that became the controlling atmosphere of our thoughts? What if you really believe that you're in the throne room of the King of Kings?

I think about the world full of turmoil—the G8 leaders meeting this weekend, the fears about the Eurozone, the NATO summit in Chicago today and tomorrow—all this political and financial turmoil. What if we remembered that we're seated with Christ in the heavenly places? Couldn't we be ambassadors of peace in this world? Couldn't we bring a prophetic word to this world—a prophetic word called the gospel of truth that brings calm in the midst of panic?

What about when we're faced with disease and death—how would this truth help us? I've seen it and the Blooms and Gartners saw it these past couple of months when it became clear that their dear father was soon going to be crossing the vale from this life into the next. One thing was absolutely clear to the very end. He knew he had a zip code in heaven and all he began to care about was feeding his faith with the truth of God's Word and communion with Jesus in prayer. He loved to focus his mind and thoughts on Christ. He was preparing to go home to be with the Lord and he died a glorious death in Christ and is with Him today. His affections were being drawn upward and it was the Word and prayer that fed him.

That's how we learn to practice the life of heaven here on earth. This is how we penetrate the veil that separates our mundane existence here below with the reality of our being seated with God in heaven. It's through prayer. It's through the Word. It's through feeding our faith. Without the Word and prayer continually filling our minds and hearts, we get so distracted and discouraged and weighed down by the cares of this life. But through the Word and prayer and communion and fellowship, we draw from the resources of the throne of grace in heaven. Our faith is strengthened. Our identity in Christ is confirmed. Our affections are drawn upward and we learn how to live heavenly lives here on earth.

Look at Colossians 3:3-4 as the concluding application of this truth. I'm sure the Apostle Paul had the truth of Ephesians 2:6 in mind as he wrote Colossians 3:1-4. Let this be the word of application that you dwell on throughout this coming week: *"If then you have been raised with Christ [and you have if you're in Him], seek the things that are above..."* Keep seeking the things that are above. Set your minds on the things that are above. Keep seeking those things *"where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and*

your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” Don’t let anyone steal your identity in Christ.

We have identity theft going on in our neighborhoods. It had happened in Elgin recently by people taking things out of mailboxes, getting credit card and bank account numbers and stealing people’s identities. Satan has been doing that from the beginning of time with God’s people. The devil knows that if you really believe Ephesians 2:6, if you really believe you’re seated with Christ in the heavenly places, he will have absolutely no power or influence over you so he wants to rob you of your identity. Don’t let him steal your crown. Set your mind on things above. Keep feeding your faith with the reality of Who Christ is. Be strengthened by the grace that flows from His throne.

Let’s pray.

Father, I ask that You would help us as Your people to walk by faith and not by sight. To believe that what You say about our union with Christ is true and powerful. I pray Father that more and more we would feed our faith, the faith that You have given us, with the truth of Your Word. That You would strengthen us with all our discouragements and distractions and disappointments and fears and wrestlings with indwelling sin. Father, I pray that You would strengthen us with this truth of who we are in Christ. Help us believe what You say about us more than we believe what we feel. Help us, Lord, to believe that sin has no more dominion over us because we are not under law but are under grace in Christ. Satan can no longer torment us because Jesus is far above all rule and authority and dominion. Jesus, to You Whose name is above every name that is named, we will forever praise You for the way God the Father has lavished His kindness on us in You, the Beloved Son. So we lift our hearts even now in praise and adoration and we worship you Lord Christ. Amen.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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