

LIVING IN UNION

Below is a recap of what the LORD recently had to say about our union with God. As Jesus neared the end of His earthly ministry when He said, ***“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; [that’s us!]”²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*** [Jn.17:20-21] This miraculous reality –THIS UNION WITH GOD or being found IN CHRIST – is referenced repeatedly throughout the New Testament. Of course, only He can make it happen, but there are a few small things we can do to participate in that happening. We must **believe....**

1. that He loves us,
2. that He has plans and desires for us,
3. that He does communicate them to us,
4. that we can and do ‘hear’ Him,
5. and that we can and do agree and cooperate with HIM in the doing.

True Christianity is not about the law or keeping certain commandments or some memorized scripture or creed. It **is** about loving and hearing the LORD or sensing the promptings of the Spirit and being agreeably responsive in a consistent and ongoing way. We are **not** under the law, **BUT WE ARE TO BE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.** I don’t know the 613 laws that bound the Jew, **but I don’t need to know them.** Knowing them would only increase the level of condemnation because, according to Scripture, no one [but Jesus] has ever kept the law.

BUT as a Christian I am constrained by the SPIRIT OF GOD to do and speak and live in harmony with however HE is prompting me. In doing so, I am living in union with HIM. Of course, I can play the game of pretending that I did not hear or understand the promptings. Kids do that to their parents the world over, but it is a lot more destructive when Christians play that same silly game with their Heavenly Father. They do ...**but so do we!** And in doing so we disrupt the union which Christ has established for those born into God’s family.

Of course we do not rob banks or beat people up, commit murder or adultery. But often we live selfishly, seeking popularity, prestige, power, possessions, fame, finances, or just simple fun rather than living our lives in union with HIM. At other times we hold on to resentment or unforgiveness or some hidden lust for recognition, sex, money, power, or whatever, while foolishly **assuming that ‘NO ONE KNOWS’.** **But God knows and He is faithful to point out those areas to us.** Often in comforting ourselves by thinking “no one knows “ or “no one can prove it”, we fail to realize that **THAT VERY PRETENSE VIOLATES OUR UNION WITH GOD.** While whatever ungodliness that is allowed is sin, the choice to hide it is a sin which is far worse..... because it hinders God’s work within us in every area which we are hiding.

Satan whispers, ***“Pretense covers a multitude of sins.”*** Ha! WHY WOULD ANYONE EVER BELIEVE THAT LIE !!!??? Yet we’ve all been there and done that. [Of course, we are clever enough NOT to buy the T-shirt]

At times we are “too busy” to obey God. At other times it is simply inconvenient so we say, “Later, don’t bother me now.” And sometimes we are so busy doing “good-stuff” that we fail

to hear and obey God's call to do "God-stuff". In Matthew 7, verse 21 Jesus gives us the following warning. ***"Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter."*** There is an expectation that God's kids will be doing God's will.

In the Gospels Jesus give this instruction repeatedly: [Luke 9:23] *He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."* The call to discipleship is certainly about denying yourself and taking up your cross, but it is also most definitely, it is also about following HIM. Dealing with our selfish desires and lusts is necessary to follow Him; intimacy and obedience is found in union. Yet, in spite of all our stupidity and failures, I believe that God is determined to do this **UNION thing in an unprecedented way** before Christ returns. He is looking for a bride without spot or wrinkle; **one who follows HIM by hearing and heeding His voice.** That is the UNION HE PRAYED FOR LONG AGO..... And HE WILL HAVE IT! We need to remember that the Scriptures urge us to ***"work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."*** God is working in us – that is union! We need to work WITH HIM to accomplish His purposes!

But, will we participate?

Forgetting the failures of the past and focusing on the upward call of Christ Jesus, we can be involved today with the 'God-stuff' which is only found in our union with HIM in Christ. That is HIS DESIRE AND PURPOSE FOR TODAY IN YOUR LIFE and mine! He desires to do stuff in and through us TODAY. If HE were to wait for us to arrive at sinless-perfection, HE COULD NEVER USE US. But He is calling for us to participate in the Kingdom Business even while there are still things that need to be changed. The necessary changes occur by HIS grace WHILE we participate with HIM in our unique assignments to "GOD-STUFF". All this is described in a lot fewer words in Eph.2:1-10. Ephesians relates how God moves us from hell's domination to heaven's throne room... and then, to the 'good stuff' which God prepared beforehand for us to walk inall in union – in Christ.

Below is how this is described in the Bible..... **Eph.2 *Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.^[a] He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.***

⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much,⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can

boast about it. ¹⁰ **For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things ["God stuff"] he planned for us long ago.**

As born-again new creations in Christ, we have the potential of operating in throne-room purpose, power, and authority. Kingdom living is available to each of us, but as Jesus pointed out, we need to deny ourselves, embrace the cross, and follow HIM. ***"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things ["God stuff"] he planned for us long ago."*** ***"Christ died for all so that those who live in HIM would NOT continue to live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised from the dead."***

But this glorious invitation almost universally unavoidably also leads to suffering. Jesus said that those who follow Him **WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION** with the following words. **[Matt 9:21-25]** ***"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents^(A) and have them put to death.²² You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.²³ When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.²⁴ "The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master.²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul. [satan] how much more the members of his household!"***

All throughout the last 2000 years, the true disciples of Christ have been persecuted and killed – sometimes by the heathen but often by fellow Christians. That same or increased level of persecution is ongoing throughout the world in our day and it is quickly coming to our country as well. The question which remains is, how shall we choose to live as darkness increases and the cost of following Christ grows greater? To some degree we are already answering that question, in our daily lives. But the question grows more difficult and urgent and potentially costly as the darkness increases. Our union with HIM **IS** effected by how we respond to the whispers of the Spirit and that is the reality in every moment of every day. It is already happening and it is unavoidable in the days ahead.

A time of great trouble and persecution has come upon the earth. **At the same time God is preparing a people for throne-room directed and empowered activities which will shake the kingdoms of the world. Now is the time for the manifestation of the sons of God which will surpass in power and scope every revival in the past 2000 years.** As children of God, seated with Christ on the throne of God, we have a work to do. He will inspire it and empower it and accomplish it with any child who is willing to participate in HIS kingdom business.

We need to remember this truth as we go about our day today.