

# **Union with Christ**

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# Union with Christ

**Legal union:** Jesus represents us. He is our legal head. He acts on our behalf. What he does is counted by God as ours.

**Living union:** Jesus lives in us and we in him through a living connection. He is our living head, and we are his body. His actions affect and direct our experience. His death, resurrection, and reign flow into our lives.

# Crucified with Christ

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin... So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Rom 6:6,11)

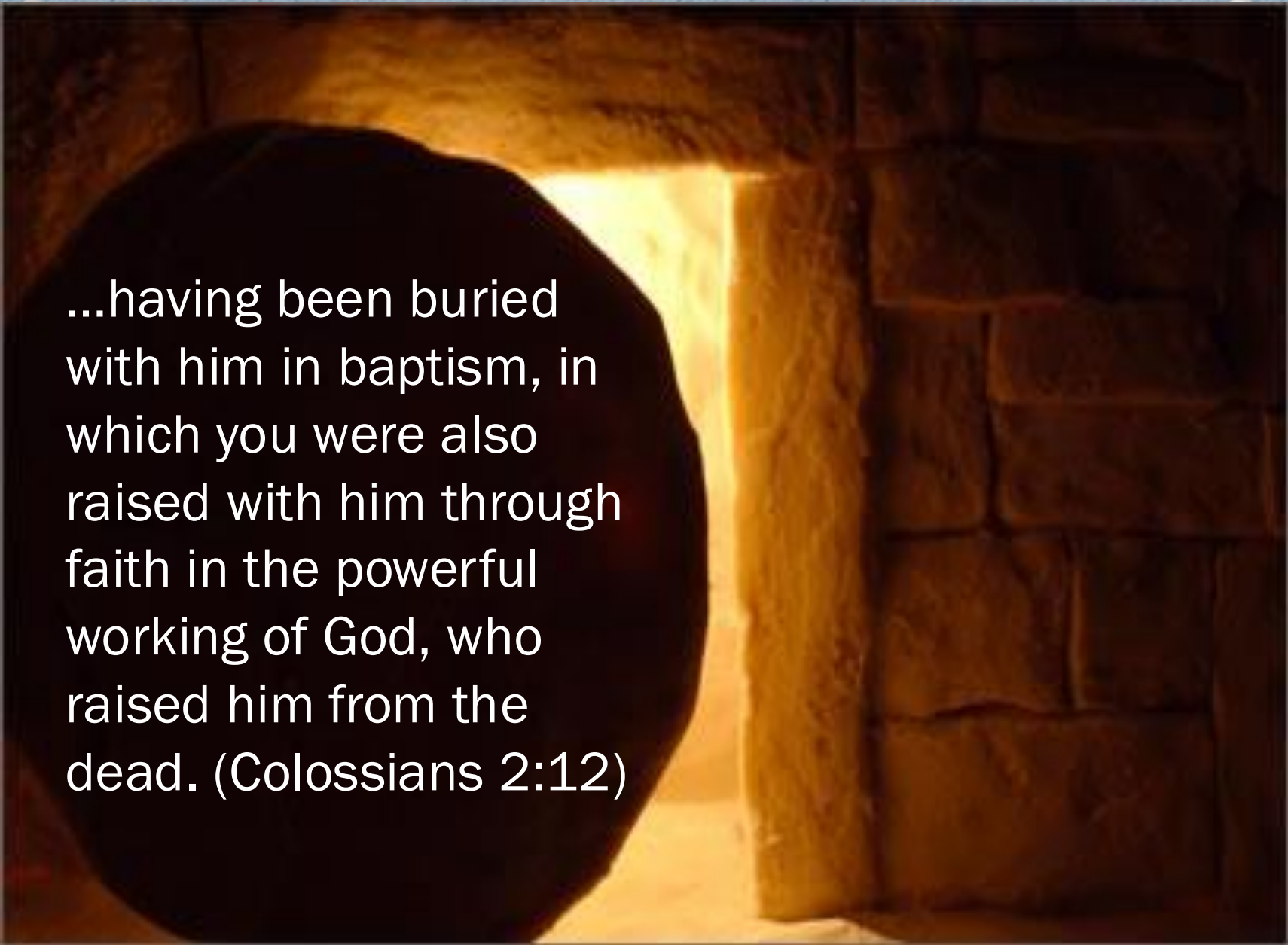
I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

# **Buried and raised with Christ**

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:3-4)

*Baptism into Christ is “the work of the Spirit which unites us to Christ, signified and sealed but not necessarily conveyed by water baptism” (R. C. Lucas).*





...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)



And you, who  
were dead in  
your trespasses  
... God made  
alive together  
with him.  
(Col 2:13)

# **Conversion as resurrection**

Every conversion is a resurrection from the dead, a participation in Jesus' resurrection. To make a dead spirit alive, God must unleash the same power he used to raise Jesus from the dead. When you put your faith in Christ, you are alive with the power that performed history's greatest miracle. In fact, your conversion is a similar miracle.

## **Raised and seated with Christ**

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. (Ephesians 2:4-6)

# Christ in you

- Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27)
- The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me. (John 17:22-23)
- ...strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (Eph 3:16-17)
- Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)

# Christ in you

- To be a Christian is not just to hold correct opinions based on the Bible, or to get off the hook for sins, or to have a ticket for heaven.
- To be a Christian is to have Christ living inside you. You don't just have eternal life; you have the life of the Eternal.

# Union with Christ

1. His suffering is your suffering.
2. His mission is your mission.
3. His mind is your mind.
4. His glory is your glory.
5. His life is your life.
6. His energy is your energy.

# 1. His suffering is your suffering.

- “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”  
“I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” (Acts 9:5,16)
- The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **provided we suffer with him** in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16-18)

# 1. His suffering is your suffering.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. (Col 1:24)

Why is this hard for us to understand?

1. We prize prosperity and pleasure, so sufferings perplex us and get us down.
2. We emphasize individualism and often overlook interconnectedness.



## **Bishop Eddie Long**

- \$3 million income
- Drives \$350,000 Bentley
- \$50 million cathedral

# Head of corporation?

- When his huge income and lavish lifestyle were questioned, Eddie Long answered, “We're not just a church, we're an international corporation. We're not just a bumbling bunch of preachers who can't talk. I deal with the White House.”
- *Genuine preachers deal with King Jesus!*

# 1. His suffering is your suffering.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ... that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may **share his sufferings**, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.  
(Philippians 1:29; 3:8-11)

# 1. His suffering is your suffering.

- For as **we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings**, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. (2 Cor 1:5)
- ... always **carrying in the body the death of Jesus**, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor 4:10-11)

# Missionary David Livingstone



- Mauled by lion
- House burned during war
- Wife died of malaria
- Died on his knees praying
- Heart buried in Africa

I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa... It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then... may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing compared with the glory which shall be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice. (David Livingstone)

# Missionary Hudson Taylor

I never made a sacrifice. Unspeakable joy all day long and every day, was my happy experience. God, even my God, was a living bright reality, and all I had to do was joyful service.



# Missionary Hudson Taylor

- Gave up his own culture, clothing, hair
- 51 years as missionary
- Survived two typhoons on a voyage
- Robbed of all possessions
- Lost everything in a fire
- Seven children died
- Wife died of malaria
- Boxer Rebellion murdered 58 missionaries and 21 children of China Inland Mission, but Taylor refused any payment, to show “the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”

# Missionary Hudson Taylor

- “If I had a thousand pounds China should have it—if I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ. Can we do too much for Him? Can we do enough for such a precious Savior?”
- “The Lord Jesus received is holiness begun; the Lord Jesus cherished is holiness advancing; the Lord Jesus counted upon as never absent would be holiness complete.”
- Taylor’s tombstone: “A Man in Christ”.

## **2. His mission is your mission.**

- I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you. (Colossians 1:25)
- Christ in you gives you a commission (co-mission), a stewardship, a domain where Christ acts through your actions and reigns through your responsibility.
- Your heart comes fully alive as you enjoy and enhance the domain where Christ acts through you in blessing others.

### **3. His mind is your mind.**

But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory... these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit... we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:7-16)

# Manifold Wisdom

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

(Ephesians 3:8-10)

## **4. His glory is your glory.**

- To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col 1:27)
- Gentiles, not only Jews, are gloriously rich.
- Christ is in us, not just with us.
- God reigns through us, not just over us.
- Christ's co-reign in my domain now is a first taste of the glory of co-reigning with Him over a far greater domain in eternity.

## **4. His glory is your glory.**

Christ is so richly glorious that he cannot be fully expressed in any one of us. Millions of believers display different facets of Christ's glory and reign. The same Christ lives in all of us and reigns in all of us by the same Spirit, yet this one Christ displays himself in different personalities who have a heart for different domains and whose personal glory displays an aspect of Christ's glory that is not to be found in any other human.

## **5. His life is your life.**

If Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:10-11)

## **5. His life is your life.**

*Why do preachers and churches exist? To proclaim Christ and form Christ in people.*

...until Christ is formed in you (Gal 4:19)

...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13)

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (Col 1:28)

## **5. His life is your life.**

What is the power within us waiting to be released? It is the actual life of God, the energy with which the Father and Son relate to each other, a set of inclinations put in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and kept alive by his presence. It is a power that is most fully released as we develop a compelling and awe-inspiring vision of who another person is and what he or she could become because of the gospel. (Larry Crabb, *Connecting*)

## **5. His life is your life.**

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom (Colossians 3:16).

*Christ living in one believer  
proclaims the living Christ  
to Christ living in other believers  
to produce full-grown life of Christ.*

# **Connecting with Christ in one another**

In heart-to-heart connections, you display the unique glory of Christ in you, and you delight in the unique glories of Christ in others.

Christians connect in order to share what Christ is doing within us, to battle together against hindrances to Christ within, and to strengthen each other. As Christ in you connects with Christ in me, I grow in Christ's power, insight, and love.

## 6. His energy is your energy

For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

(Colossians 1:29)

*When you do Christ's work in your assigned domain, you are energized by Christ.*

He is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us. (Ephesians 3:20)

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# St. Patrick's Breastplate

I rise today  
with the power of God to pilot me,  
God's strength to sustain me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look ahead for me,  
God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me,  
God's hand to protect me,  
God's way before me,  
God's shield to defend me,  
God's host to deliver me

# St. Patrick's Breastplate

Christ with me, Christ before me,  
Christ behind me; Christ within me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me;  
Christ to the right of me,  
Christ to the left of me;  
Christ in my lying down,  
Christ in my sitting, Christ in my rising;  
Christ in the heart of all who think of me,  
Christ on the tongue of all who speak to me,  
Christ in the eye of all who see me,  
Christ in the ear of all who hear me.