

Room for Jesus ~ The Magnificence

John 14:16-24; Galatians 2:19-21

There are three mystical unions here on earth – the union of our body and soul in one person; the union of a husband and a wife, becoming one flesh; and the union of parents with their children. We are so accustomed to them that we barely give them a second thought. But it is helpful to be reminded of these when we turn to gaze upon greater mystical unions of heaven.

The first is the union of the three distinct persons of the Godhead in one completely shared infinite nature. As Augustine so wonderfully put it: _____.

The second is the miracle of Christmas in the Person of Christ Jesus, a union of God the Son with that of a perfect humanity, two distinct natures, but one Person. 100% God + 100% Man = One Person.

The third is the one before us today: the union of the Lord Jesus with His mystical body, of which He is the Head. We find the Scriptures insisting upon all His people are one, engrafted into Him and He into them.

Of course Jesus does more and is more to us than the indweller. He is over us as our Master and King, He is beneath us as our foundation and upholder, He is before us as our Captain and Shepherd, and He is behind us, our Servant; and with us, our Friend; and for us, our Advocate.

But this indwelling is special, being in us, because of the intimacy of such an inward union.

The Bible says Christ dwells in your hearts by faith; it is no longer I but Christ lives in me; Christ is formed in us; Christ in you, the hope of glory!

As we address the magnificence of this Christian truth today, having seen the must, the necessity of this last Sunday, be reminded of the other glorious part of this union. Is He in us? Then we are also in Him.

One of our favorite verses must be Colossians 3 –

*² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ **in** God. (Col 3:2-3 NAU)*

Wow! In the Father and in the Son – hidden in Him; not only held in and by His everlasting hand, but in His everlasting heart! There is no fortress, no shelter, no hiding place, no home like this!! Angels are in awe of these things, for they have no nearness to the heart of God like this! We are in Him, and He is in us.

The greatest recorded prayer ever prayed ended with this magnificent truth – “I have made Your name Father known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You love Me may be in them, and I in them.” And when Jesus would teach of the glory of Christian fruit, He could reach no higher than “Abide in Me, and I in you.” “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.”

Here in John 14, which begins with Christ making a home for us in glory so as to be with us, here in the middle makes us His home. Verse 20 is the highpoint – “I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

See the background to Christ's inbeing of the Christian is the mutual in-being of the Father and the Son – the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father. How can they be otherwise, when they share the same indivisible, infinite, eternal substance or nature?

But this has reference to the purpose of God being one in both the Father and Son – that their purpose is that the believer would be indwelt by Christ, and the believer indwells the Savior who indwells the Father. To put it succinctly – we indwell the Father indwelt by the Son who indwells the Christian.

Keep your finger here and turn over to John 17:21 – again, Trinitarian unity is found to be the model and basis of Christian unity. Our unity with one another is preceded by union with God the Father by the Son in 21a.

This has its connection in the Christ – drop down to 23. Christological unity is central in this in-being of unity. Is it not a wonder that the Lord ushers us into such an intimate and full relationship in God?

Surely there are lines here which must be rightly measured. When Jesus says in chapter 15, that as the Father has love Me, so have I loved you – certainly we are not to think that the Father's love for His eternal Son – a love from God to God – can be attributed to us. God loves us like He loves Himself, but He cannot love us as God.

But the fullness, the richness, the greatness, the incredible nature of this union, stands out remarkably in this passage. We are embraced and taken into the very bosom of the Father in the Son, by their indwelling us by the Holy Spirit.

Coming back then to our passage in 14, we can add three more layers to our understanding of this in-dwelling, this Christ finding room in us.

It is a living, resurrected connection – verse 19. The Spirit of Christ dwelling in us takes the things of the death-conquering Christ in glory, and we are not only raised with Him, but enjoy fellowship that is living, eternal, unconquerable.

Second, it is the warmest, familial connection – verse 18. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of the Father, adopting us, making us heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. All the rights and privileges as children are ours, introducing and adjusting us to the glory and stunning amazing truth that we really are beloved of God!

Third, from verses 16-17, it is a Spirit-given, Word-centered union. These are remarkable lines, which tell us the completed revelation of Jesus in the Scriptures of the Old and especially of the New Testament, is how and where the glory of God shines into your hearts, fills you with His abiding presence, where the same inspiring Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, continues to reveal the Son to and in us, by this eternal Book!

Hugh Martin's marvelous work, "The Abiding Presence" – makes the case that the Spiritual biography of Jesus our Head and His abiding presence in us, are linked in the closest way. There is no Word of God without the Spirit of Christ, and there is no mystical communion with the Spirit of Christ apart from the Word. Do you see how Christians have failed in this area? Wanting one without the other? Closeness to

God spiritually but not scripturally? Or on the other side, closeness scripturally but not spiritually? Pure externalism or pure internalism.

Now the fruit of this union described here is rich in every way.

Here is a loving, mutual, responsive connection – knowing, loving, worshiping, and obeying in verse 21.

John 17 adds several further qualities to it:

- This is a most loving union in verse 23.
- The proof of this union testifies to the world of Jesus saving mission from heaven in verse 21.
- This union is oriented to the future, being hope-filled, looking to what is to come in 22 and 24.
- Finally, knowing the Father through the love of Jesus is found in this union (25-26).

Now Paul takes this truth and puts it in a more concrete form for us in Galatians 2:20, where he tells us that Christ lives in the Christian. The old man has been crucified with Christ. The Christian lives now by having been once for all crucified with Christ and a new life given.

That new life, then, is furthermore inhabited by Christ. The Christian lives by a faith in this loving, self-giving Son of God, who is both outside and inside of the believer.

It is furthermore a life that is through grace and not through the law apart from God. Trying to drive the law into our lives apart from grace, the cross, death to the guilt and power of sin, apart from the indwelling Christ, is contrary to the two proper uses of the Law: First, to drive us out of ourselves into the arms of Jesus and second, to be a measure of thankfulness to Him.

We are nullifying of the grace of God if we look at the law in any way to be our righteousness or life – something it was never intended to do. Didn't Paul insist that if there were a law that would bring about life, God would have given it?

No, it is the Lord Himself who has come to the door of fallen man, to open their hard hearts to hear the glad tidings of great joy. "For you are the temple of the living God: as God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them: and I will be their God and they shall be My people." 2 Cor. 6.16

This indwelling then is something different from the new heart implanted in every believer. Indwelling is not the same as regeneration. You are a new creature in Christ; born again; spiritually raised from the dead; quickened from above. Christ in His Spirit then indwells, inhabits all such changed hearts. He does not inhabit a hard and dead heart, but is a living Lord in living stones.

Nor is indwelling the same as the filling of the Spirit. The Savior's taking room in our hearts, our souls, is permanent. But being filled with the Spirit is a recurring event. Being filled implies rises and falls. We can quench the Spirit, grieve the Spirit, move the Spirit to jealousy, and in that sense, the Spirit being grieved is low in our lives, our hearts cold, our ways poor and miserable; when we are not walking with the Lord.

Nevertheless such a redeemed soul can never be fully or finally lost. How beautifully does our Confession capture this truth:

WCF 17.2 This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the

covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

WCF 17.3 Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves. (WCF 17:2-3 WCS)

In closing then, I would draw your attention to two applications.

First of all, to those who do not savingly know the One born in Bethlehem – I hope you can see that Jesus entered this world so as to enter your life. People sing of peace on earth, good will to men – but then complain, ‘where is the peace? Where is the great joy in our fallen and sinful world? Didn’t Jesus promise peace and gladness? Doesn’t this mean He failed?’

Not at all. Jesus did not come with a thin, weak remedy to put a Band-Aid on a much deeper and deadly wound! He can and He does bring peace – but to those and those only who receive Him into their hearts by faith – who make room for Him, all room, as the only Savior from heaven.

Jesus will bring everlasting peace to this troubled world – after the judgment. But none will have this peace except those who have Jesus. Get this clearly: heaven must enter you before you can enter heaven.

Have you received Him, sent by the Father, Prince of Peace, to die for your sins and mine?

Then to you who have Christ in you, the hope of glory, let me draw attention to the dignity you bear as one in whom Christ dwells. The name Christopher – Christ-Bearer – is your name who has Jesus within you. Whatever you do, wherever you go, however you carry yourself, at all times and in all places, Christ not only sees and is with you and is moved by what you do, but He is in you by His Spirit.

What holiness in soul and body ought we desire for Him! He has not indwelt a temple made of stone or brick – which was by Solomon richly decorated with gold and gems. The gold and gems of the kingdom of God are the fruit of the Spirit, sanctification by the loving fear of the Lord.

Let us not be ignorant of these things, but walk differently, live with a purpose, worship and serve Him in our generation. There is nothing lacking on the Lord's side who gives you life abundant and eternal. Let that life be manifest humbly and faithfully, in your homes, your work, your entertainments, and especially in the church.

May your life be truly a prayer filled with Christ's Spirit who indwells your Spirit. I would close with this devotion from the Valley of Vision, a collection of prayers and praises from the Puritan era:

This is called: "Spiritus Sanctus"

"O Holy Spirit,

*As the sun is full of light, the ocean full of water, heaven full of glory,
so may my heart be full of Thee.*

*Vain are all divine purposes of love and the redemption wrought by
Jesus except Thou work within,*

*regenerating by Thy power, giving me eyes to see Jesus, showing
me the realities of the unseen world.*

*Give me Thyself without measure, as an unimpaired fountain,
as inexhaustible riches.*

I deplore my cold, poor, empty living; imperfect vision, lazy service;

prayerless prayers, praiseless praises.
Allow me not to grieve or resist Thee.
Come as power – to expel every rebel lust, to reign supreme
and keep me thine.
Come as teacher – leading me into all truth,
filling me with all understanding.
Come as love – that I might adore the Father, and love Him as my all.
Come as joy – to dwell in me, move in me, animate me.
Come as light – illuminating the Scripture, molding me in its laws.
Come as sanctifier – body, soul and spirit wholly Thine.
Come as helper – with strength to bless and keep,
directing my every step.
Come as beautifier – bringing order out of confusion,
loveliness out of chaos.
Magnify to me Your glory by being magnified in me,
and make me redolent of Your fragrance.
Amen.