



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

Unification – Union with Christ

Lesson 22 – We are in Christ

September 3, 2017

I. Lesson Starter:

Today we start our third and final section of this series, titled “Unification, our Union with Christ”. What does it mean to be “in Christ”? What does it mean to be “united in Christ”? We will explore the concept of our union with Christ. We will study each of the following:

- **We are in Christ**
- Christ is in us
- We are like Christ
- We are with Christ

II. Explanation and Scriptural Basis

Every aspect of our God’s relationship to believers is in some way connected to our relationship with Christ. From God’s counsel in eternity past before the world was created, to our fellowship with God in heaven for eternity future and including every aspect of our relationship with God in this life – all has occurred in union with Christ.

We may define “union with Christ” as follows:

- *Union with Christ is a phrase word used to summarize several different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation. These relationships include the fact that we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we are like Christ and we are with Christ.*

III. We are in Christ

1. In God’s Eternal Plan

Ephesians 1:4

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 1:11-14

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

2 Timothy 1:9-10

⁹ He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

God chose us “in Christ” before the foundation of the earth. Later he saved us and called us for “his own purpose”. Since obviously we did not exist before the foundation of the world, God saw into the future and knows all(omniscient), that we would exist, having accepted him and be in a special relationship with Christ.

- God thought of us being in a special relationship with Christ, belonging to Christ in a special way or “being in Christ”. This also gives us the right to share in the blessing of Christ's work.

2. During Christ Life on Earth

Throughout Christ's life on earth, God thought of us as being “in Christ”. Whatever Christ did as our savior and representative, God counted as being something we did. While we are not saying that believers were consciously present with Christ, nor are we saying the believers were present in Christ in some mysterious spiritual way, rather believers were present “in Christ” and his thoughts as he was going through all that he did for us while on earth.

Romans 5:19

¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Since God thought of us being “in Christ”, he also could think of our sins belonging to Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, it says that “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us”. This includes both all past and not yet committed sins. Also when Christ died, God thought of us as having died. Our of self was “crucified with him” (Romans 6:6).

- “one has died for all, therefore we have all died” (2 Cor. 5:14)

Therefore when Christ returned to heaven, all the blessings of salvation were earned for us through him and “in him”. These were stored up in heaven and in Christ, our representative, waiting to be applied to us personally (1 Peter 1:3-5)

IV. Group Questions

1. Can someone have a relationship with God that is not in some way connected through Christ? What would the phrase and meaning of “in Christ” be if the answer was yes? Discuss for all peoples.
2. Think our previous series on God's Characteristics and in particular “Omniscience”, discuss how before the foundation of the world God knew of our Union with Christ? This can be answered and discussed no matter your scriptural interpretation of predestination, so do not get hung up on that part.
3. Read Ephesians 1:11-14, when does it say we were “marked and sealed in him”? Discuss
4. What does our special relationship with Christ through salvation do for us with respect to blessings of Christ work?
5. As you look at Romans 5:19, have you ever really thought about us being present “in Christ” as he lived on this earth?
6. Through this lesson, we have expanded our understanding of the phrase “in Christ for Believers” to include what aspects of Christ?