

Summary

- a) This session is the eighth of ten sessions that looks at a vital principle that fosters Spirit-led living.
- b) The eighth principle that we will examine is this: You must rely upon the indwelling Spirit to align your living condition—how much you experience of the finished work of the cross—to your legal position in Christ.

A Vital Question to Answer

- a) What is the difference between your legal position in Christ and your living condition because Christ is in you?
- b) I'm pretty sure this is not a question you ask often, if ever. My hunch is you are far more concerned with paying the bills, taking care of your family, enhancing your career, overcoming a sin or shortcoming, seeing a broken relationship mended, enjoying life, or planning for a better tomorrow.
- c) But what if the answer to this theological question could actually help you in the practical, everyday issues of life? What if the answer to this question helped you become a better provider and a wiser father or mother? What if understanding this concept helped you defeat a besetting sin, heal a torn relationship, experience more joy and contentment, and prepare for a better future?
- d) Here's what I have discovered. When you gain more of Christ, everything about your life is just better.
- e) Having more of Christ in your life means greater measures of Christ's love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faith, meekness, wisdom, and self-control. And less of your selfishness, sins, and shortcomings.
- f) But to gain more of Christ and lose more of you, the gap between your legal position and your living condition must be closed.

Your Legal Position Versus Your Living Condition

- a) The table below details the difference between your legal position and your living condition.

Legal Position	Living Condition
Your legal position is what Christ finished for you on the cross.	Your living condition is what the Spirit has finished in your spirit and is now finishing in your heart, soul, and body.
Your legal position hinges on identification.	Your living condition depends upon experience.
Your legal position is constituted, imputed, and reckoned.	Your living condition is life-based, actualized, and incarnated.
Your legal position is an accomplished fact.	Your living condition is determined by faith in this accomplished fact.

- b) Your legal position in Christ is the result of three realities:
 1. You are in Christ by God's doing;
 2. Jesus Christ is your representative in the new covenant;

3. You were baptized into the body of Jesus Christ at new birth.

c) We will focus on these three realities for the rest of the message.

You Are in Jesus Christ

- a) Jesus said, “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” (John 14:20).
- b) Living the abiding life requires revelation of what it means to be in Christ and for Christ to be in you.
- c) Since we have already spent many sessions looking at Christ in you, we will focus on what it means to be in Christ in this session.

A Theological Concept with Practical Value

- a) Several years ago, I was teaching from Romans 6, where Paul taught we have been crucified, buried, and resurrected with Christ. This chapter took me years to understand, and I consider it to be like fine gold, a rare truth with immense value. It is a precious pearl of revelation to me.
- b) But when I first taught this passage, I was shocked how one lady I’ll call Sally responded. Afterwards, Sally jokingly said something like, “I don’t have a clue what you just talked about.” And although she didn’t say it, Sally implied, *and I don’t care to know*. Her indifference grieved my heart deeply.
- c) Whereas this precious truth transformed my life, Sally viewed it as complicated and impractical. And because of her incorrection perception, she had no interest in doing the hard work of mining for gold.
- d) Like Sally, some view Romans 6, which describes our legal position in Christ, as a theological theory, devoid of practical value, only relevant to scholars, teachers, pastors, and leaders.
- e) Because Sally—and others like her—don’t immediately see the practical benefit of their legal position in Christ, they have no interest in plumbing the depths of Scripture to understand it for themselves. Sadly, they miss out on a life-transforming truth and are hindered from living fully by Christ’s indwelling life.
- f) As you listen to this message, I encourage you not to be like Sally. Pay close attention to the important concepts detailed, even if at first it seems impractical and complex. I assure you—understanding this will transform your life.
- g) From personal experience, I know Romans 6 is a rare treasure with immense practical value in your quest to live by Christ’s indwelling life, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to bear lasting fruit for God.

What It Means to Be in Christ

- a) Paul told the Corinthians, “But by His doing *you are in Christ Jesus*, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30, emphasis mine). Pay close attention to the phrase *you are in Christ Jesus*.
- b) The phrase *in Christ* appears eighty-eight times in the NASB translation. At least twenty occurrences refer to our position in Christ. Clearly, this subject is a vital New Testament theme. From Romans to 1 Peter, the apostles used this phrase to expound upon the vast implications of being in Jesus Christ.
- c) Below are some verses to consider:

Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God *in Christ Jesus*” (Rom. 6:11, emphasis mine).

If anyone is *in Christ*, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come (2 Cor. 5:17, emphasis mine).

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God *in Him*" (2 Cor. 5:21, emphasis mine).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places *in Christ*" and He "raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*" (Eph. 1:3; 2:6, emphasis mine).

In Him you have been made complete . . . and *in Him* you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:10-11, emphasis mine).

- d) In Christ, you have been crucified, buried, and resurrected (Rom. 6:3-5, 6). This means you have died to sin, to self, and to the Law (Rom. 6:2; 7:4). It also means your spirit has been resurrected and you are now alive to God (Rom. 6:11; 8:10).
- e) In Christ, you have ascended with Him, are seated with Him in heaven, and are an overcomer (Eph. 2:6; Rom. 8:37).
- f) In Christ, you are also righteous, have been made complete, and are an heir to every spiritual blessing (2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 2:10; Eph. 1:3).
- g) Numerous other verses could be listed, but I think you see the immense blessings which belong to you in Christ Jesus.
- h) Referring back to 1 Corinthians 1:30, notice Paul also said *but by His doing* you are in Christ Jesus. How are you in Christ Jesus? *By God's doing* and His doing alone.
- i) When you put your faith in Jesus Christ and what He finished for you on the cross, the Holy Spirit regenerated your spirit, came to dwell within your spirit, and joined Himself to your spirit. This is what it means to be born of the Spirit—and it's also how the *by His doing you are in Christ* took place.
- j) By God's doing—and His doing alone—the Spirit recreated your spirit, joined Himself to your spirit, and placed you in Christ Jesus. Make no mistake about it—if you are in Christ, it's only by the Lord's doing, not anything you did.
- k) Even though you are in Christ by His doing, it can still be difficult to grasp all the implications this has in your life. That's why I want to give you four simple examples to help you better understand this concept.

Four Examples of What It Means to Be in Christ

a) *Example 1 – A Passenger on An Airplane*

Consider what happens when you get on an airplane. Your destination completely depends upon the plane. If the plane is flying from New York to London, you will arrive in London, even if you were expecting to arrive in Rome.

If after takeoff, the plane has mechanical problems and has to stop in Boston, you are going to Boston. If the plane experiences engine failure and crashes, you will crash with it.

Whether the plane lands safely in London, makes an emergency stop in Boston, or crashes in the Atlantic, your destiny depends entirely upon the plane because you are in it.

b) *Example 2 – A SIM Card*

Consider the SIM card in your cell phone, which stores your identity, location, phone number, network authorization data, personal security keys, and stored text messages. The SIM card must be in your phone at all times to make and receive calls.

Take it out and the phone will not work. That means, if you travel to the mountains with your cell phone and want to receive calls, your SIM card is going with you. If you travel to the beach with your cell phone and want to make calls, your SIM card is going with you.

In short, the destiny of the SIM card is tied to the cell phone.

c) *Example 3 – Marriage*

Consider marriage, when a man and woman leave their father and mother, cling to one another, and become one flesh. Everything belonging to the husband, both the good and the bad, now belongs to the wife. Conversely, everything belonging to the wife, both the good and the bad, now belongs to the husband.

If the man had a million dollars in his bank account prior to marriage, the woman now has a million dollars in her bank account after marriage.

If the woman had a history of health issues, these now become the husband's responsibility. Or if the husband had complicated family issues, the wife has now married into these "fun" family dynamics, making these her own issues to navigate.

d) *Example 4 – Hawaii Joining the United States*

Leroy Forelines shared the following example in his book *Classical Arminianism*:

Prior to the time that Hawaii became a part of the United States, a citizen of Hawaii could not have said, "We celebrate our day of Independence on July 4." Immediately upon their becoming a state, the same person who formerly could not make the statement could say, "We celebrate our day of Independence on July 4." What happened on July 4, 1776, became a part of their history. The history of the United States became the history of Hawaii, and the history of Hawaii became the history of the United States.¹

- e) Similar to the passenger on an airplane, the SIM card in a cell phone, the man and woman in marriage, and Hawaii becoming the fiftieth state of America, when you are joined to Christ on the condition of faith and become one spirit with the indwelling Spirit in a vital union with Christ, your history and destiny now depend entirely upon Christ. Everything He is, has experienced, purchased, and overcame is now part of your history, destiny, experience, and victory.
- f) Prior to your union with Christ by faith, you could not say, "I have been crucified with Christ. I have died with Christ. I have been buried with Christ. I have been resurrected with Christ. I have ascended with Christ. And I am seated with Christ." But immediately after you were joined to Christ by faith, you could make all these statements.
- g) Your union with Christ on the condition of faith results in your identification with Christ in His crucifixion, burial, death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement.

Summarizing What It Means to Be in Christ

- a) When you put your faith in Jesus Christ and are born again, everything about Christ is imputed to you. As a result, you become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

- b) The Lord's crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection were also imputed to you, so that in God's eyes, you are reckoned to have been crucified, buried, and resurrected with Him.
- c) Throughout Romans 6, Paul repeated this truth, stating,
- "We . . . died to sin" (Rom. 6:2);
 - We were "baptized into His death" (Rom. 6:3);
 - We were "buried with Him . . . into death" (Rom. 6:4);
 - We were "united with Him in the likeness of His death . . . [and] resurrection" (Rom. 6:5, emphasis mine);
 - "Our old self was crucified with Him" (Rom. 6:6);
 - "We have died with Christ" (Rom. 6:8);
 - and we are "dead to sin" and "alive to God" (Rom. 6:11).
- d) As your substitute, Christ became sin and a sin offering to atone for your sins. As your substitute, Christ absorbed the condemnation and wrath you deserve, so you never have to experience this yourself. And as your substitute, Christ died instead of you, so you don't have to die for your sins.
- e) But as your representative, you were included in Christ's death, so His death became your death. As your representative, you were also included in Christ's resurrection, so you can walk in new life.
- f) This means, for all who are in union with Jesus Christ on the condition of faith and through the regenerating work of the Spirit, the historical cross of Christ has become an all-inclusive cross, a corporate cross, completely severing your link with Adam.
- g) Now you are no longer in Adam but are in Christ. Now you are no longer of the old Adamic creation but are a new creation in Jesus Christ.
- h) This means, because you are in Christ, your history, destiny, experience, and victory are now tied to Him, just as a passenger is wholly dependent on an airplane, a SIM card to a cell phone, a husband and wife to one another, and Hawaii to the United States.

Honest Questions to Ask

- a) Perhaps, like Sally, you wonder what, exactly, are the practical implications of being included in Christ's crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection?
- b) Does this deep theological truth really have practical value when lust flares up in your body, anger rages in your soul, coveting eclipses your desire for God, and prideful thoughts dominate your mind?
- c) When your flesh rises up with force, what value does your inclusion in the historic crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ actually have?
- d) Does your legal death to sin have any real power to turn your eyes from looking at a woman to lust? To humble yourself before others and admit your failures? To love your enemies when they persecute you? To enable you to submit to those in authority?
- e) When lust, anger, pride, coveting, greed, or rebellion pulsate in your soul, does it really help to know that you are dead to sin in Christ?

- f) Let's be honest . . . you, God, and the devil all know your flesh is very much alive and wants to sin. So, does knowing about your position in Christ really offer hope for a lasting and thorough victory?
- g) The answer to all these questions is an emphatic *yes*. Knowing you were included in Christ's historic crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection does have practical value to living by Christ's indwelling life and your war against sin.

Walk in Newness of Life

- a) Paul said, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, *so that* as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, *so we too* might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4, emphasis mine).
- b) Pay close attention to the italicized words *so that* and *so we too*. This emphasizes the importance of knowing you were included in Christ's death, for this is a precursor to living by His life.
- c) How do we know that? Because when Paul said to *walk in newness of life*, it was another way of saying *to live by Christ's indwelling life*. Therefore, there's a clear connection between knowing you were included in Christ's crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection and living everyday by His life.
- d) Now let me show the correlation between knowing your inclusion in Christ's death and overcoming sin. Paul said, "Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin" (Rom. 6:6).
- e) The Greek word for *might be done away with* is *katargeō* and it means to "render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative, to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency, or to deprive of force, influence, or power."²
- f) To keep it simple, let's just use what the NIV translation puts as a footnote to this phrase, which is *rendered powerless*.
- g) When you *know* by revelation your old self was crucified with Christ, it renders your body of sin powerless. This means meditating repeatedly upon the truth of your inclusion in Christ's crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection strengthens your spirit while weakening your flesh, eventually giving you permeant, lasting, and thorough victory.

Jesus Christ Is Your New Covenant Representative

- a) Many believers don't comprehend what it means to be in Christ because they don't understand covenant.
- b) Without a firm grasp of covenant concepts, understanding the gospel, especially the book of Romans, is difficult. Therefore, let's spend a few minutes looking at how we are in Christ through our new covenant relationship with Him.
- c) Paul's audience in his epistles were very familiar with covenants, for covenants were a common way of securing alliances, pacts, and treaties in the first century.
- d) Because of this common method of binding two parties together, Paul did not have to explain covenant terms to his readers. He used covenant terms freely, without explanation, because his audience understood what he was talking about.
- e) For us in the Western world, who are unfamiliar with covenants and covenant concepts, it can be difficult understanding what it means to be in Christ. To help you better understand your position in Christ, therefore, I will give a brief overview of covenant.

- f) The word *covenant* is used over three hundred times in Scripture.³ It's a concept that permeates both the Old and New Testaments and is a central theme throughout the Bible. In fact, what is normally called the Old Testament and New Testament should be called the Old Covenant and New Covenant, since the word *testament* can be used interchangeably with *covenant*.
- g) Covenant is so important it separates two dispensations in the Bible.
- h) A covenant is a formal, solemn, and binding agreement, joining two parties together as one. Often secured by a blood sacrifice, a covenant unites two parties together based upon a common agreement, typically extending to future generations.
- i) Whenever a covenant was cut between two parties, a covenant representative was always selected on behalf of each group. These representatives entered the covenant on behalf of everyone in their party and would thus bind the entire group to the expectations of the covenant agreement.
- j) Everyone who belonged to a particular party was considered to be *in* their representative. This means everything the representative did and agreed to in making the covenant would be imputed to each member of the group.

An Example Covenant

- a) Let's suppose two tribes, the Exousia tribe and the Zoe tribe, wanted to enter into a covenant. The Exousia tribe, renowned for its strength, valor, and cutting-edge tactics in warfare, wanted to cut covenant with the Zoe tribe, famous for their farming practices.
- b) The covenant between the two tribes would ensure protection for the Zoes in exchange for training and equipping the Exousias in the art of agriculture.
- c) To begin the covenant ceremony, a representative is selected from both tribes. To signify the Exousias' vow to protect every member of the Zoe tribe from enemy attacks, the Exousia representative hands the Zoe representative a sword. Likewise, the Zoe representative gives the Exousia representative a stalk of corn, signifying the Zoes' vow to train the Exousias to farm.
- d) Though each member of the Exousia and Zoe tribes did not directly cut covenant with each other, they are treated as if they were *in* their representative when the covenant was enacted. Each member of the Exousia tribe is reckoned to have received the stalk of corn and each member of the Zoe tribe is reckoned to have received the sword.
- e) Since the individual members of each tribe were *in* their representative, the terms and conditions of the covenant were imputed to each individual in both tribes. As a result, every member of the Exousia tribe can call on their covenant partners, the Zoes, to help them farm. And every member of the Zoe tribe can call on their covenant partners, the Exousias, to help them fight their enemies.
- f) To reiterate, everything the covenant representative did and agreed to in the covenant ceremony is imputed to every member of their tribe, for each member is reckoned to be *in* their representative.
- g) This means every member of both tribes receives the benefits and responsibilities of the covenant agreement, as if each one made the binding agreement themselves. This covenant concept can be summarized by the phrase *imputation by representation*.

Baptized Into Christ's Body

- a) Paul made an amazing statement when he said, "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). Notice carefully the body of Christ *is* Christ. What a profound statement and revelation.

- b) How, exactly, did you become part of the body of Christ and thus become part of Christ? Paul answered this question in the next verse, stating, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13).
- c) When you were born of the Spirit and Christ came to dwell within you, the Spirit immersed you into the global body of Christ. The very body who expresses Christ’s life in the earth.
- d) From Jesus’ perspective, His body *is* Him. This becomes clear when you examine Saul’s (Paul’s) life-transforming, history-altering encounter with the risen Christ.
- e) As Saul traveled to Damascus, a bright light suddenly flashed around him, knocking him to the ground. In the midst of the blinding light, Saul heard Jesus speak to him, saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me . . . I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:4-5).
- f) Wait! What? How could Saul possibly be persecuting Jesus, who had ascended to heaven several years before this encounter? Well . . . in Jesus’ eyes His body is an extension of Himself. To treat His body well is to treat Him well. Conversely, to persecute His body is to persecute Him. The body of Christ on earth is Jesus on earth. Together, we are the expression of His life in the earth.
- g) This point becomes resoundingly clear in Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46). Without getting into all the details of this parable, it’s obvious the way you treat the Lord’s brothers is how you treat Him (Matt. 25:40).
- h) If members of His body are hungry and you feed them, you also feed the Lord. If members of His body are thirsty and you give them something to drink, you also give the Lord a drink. The same is true with visiting prisoners, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and showing hospitality to the stranger.
- i) The way you treat the body of Christ is the way you treat Christ, for in the Lord’s eyes, His body is an extension of Himself.

Identified with Christ

- a) All who are part of the body of Christ through new birth were included in Christ’s crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. In God’s eyes, He sees you crucified, buried, and resurrected in Christ.
- b) Paul said, “Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law *through the body of Christ*, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God” (Rom. 7:4).
- c) Notice you personally died to the law through the body of Christ. How is this possible, since the crucifixion took place almost two-thousand years ago and you weren’t even born? Because, when you were regenerated by the Spirit, you were at that time baptized into the body of Christ.
- d) Therefore, when the Father looks at you, He sees you in Christ, since you belong to His body. This means, when Christ was crucified almost two-thousand years ago, you were included in His crucifixion and death. In God’s eyes, you have died to sin, to self, and to the Law.
- e) This becomes clearer when you examine Paul’s statement in Romans 6:5, when he said, “We have become united with Him in the likeness of His death” and “in the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom. 6:5).
- f) The Greek word for *united* is *symphytos* and it means “born together with, of joint origin, connate, congenital, innate, implanted by birth or nature, grown together, united with, kindred.”⁴
- g) Based upon this Greek word, when your spirit was reborn, you were *born together with* Christ, united to Him spirit to Spirit. In your spirit, you have inherited the same traits and characteristics of Christ and are therefore *of joint origin* with Him.

- h) This means, the moment you were born again, all of Christ's characteristics and experiences were implanted within your spirit. This includes His crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection.

¹ See page 215 in the Kindle app.

² "G2673 - katargeō - Outline of Biblical Usage (nasb95)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 9 Jun, 2022.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2673/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.

³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=covenant&t=NASB95#s=s_primary_0_1, referenced on 5/20/2022.

⁴ "G4854 - symphytos - Outline of Biblical Usage (nasb95)." Blue Letter Bible. Accessed 9 Jun, 2022.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4854/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.