

Born Again into Union with God

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Scriptures: John 3

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## **Union**

Jesus died to bring us into union with God.

You say, “I thought Jesus died to save me from my sins?” His death 100% did save you from your sin...and that is a major part of “what” is sacrifice accomplished, but that’s not why Jesus died for you.

That’s like me saying, “I got married to set myself free from being single.”

Jesus died because we were separated from the Father, and that was not ok with Him. We were created to be one with God. We were not created to be saved, we were created to be possessed by God.

Salvation from sin is the means.

Union, one-ness, a joining together of that which sin had separated is the ends.

The gospel of the kingdom isn’t good news because it promises salvation for sinners, or heaven for those who are destined for hell; the gospel is good news because it promises union between God and man. The gospel promises that one Man died for all men, and if one died for all then, according to 2 Corinthians 5:14, all died. Why? Because to those who believe in this gospel, they are joined in union with the Man who died...His death becomes their death, and His resurrection becomes their resurrection. The gospel promises that being “in Christ” means that what happened to Jesus happened to anyone who is joined to Him,

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

“Christ in you” is the hope of our glory (Colossians 1.27).

The prayer for union between you and Jesus is one of the last things that He prayed for on the night He was betrayed,

“Father, I pray that they may be one in Us...I in them, and You in Me”  
(John 17:21, 23).

This reality of union between God and His people is so foundational to the gospel message that the terms “in Him” and “in Christ” are found 180 times in the New Testament.

### **“In Him” vs “With Him”**

Being “in Him” is not the same as being “with Him.” An example of those who were with Jesus but not one with Him are the crowds mentioned at the end of John 2, those who believed in Him because of His mighty works and they were in close proximity, but there was no exchange taking place there (His faith/life for theirs)...there was no born again reality for those people, because when Jesus began to offend their minds with things like “pick up your cross and follow Me” or “eat My flesh and drink My blood” the condition of their hearts was revealed. He offended their mind to reveal their heart. They were “with Him”, but as long as their hearts were offended by His ways, they could never be “in Him.”

### Meta

One of the Greek words for “with” is *Meta*. *Meta* means to be with in close proximity but without intimacy.

For example; there were two criminals that died beside Jesus. Both began that morning by being “with Jesus”...*meta*. But only one was brought “into Him” as a result of genuine faith.

Being “with Jesus” is a great place to start but a terrible place to finish. Being with Jesus is good...so good that it’s good enough for millions of people in churches across America one day a week. Come to church and experience what it’s like to be in the vicinity of God...experience His presence. But that’s the mistake of the crowds in John 2, they loved the experience of His presence, and the blessings that being around Him gave them.

The same can be said for our highly charged charismatic worship experiences and choreographed conferences. This question needs to be shouted from every pulpit in every charismatic event in America;

“welcome, we’re glad you’re here, but before experience the benefit of His name we want to ask; are you in Him or are you here because of the benefits that happen when His name is proclaimed?”

So let me ask you, is there an internal flame in you or are you content to warm yourself beside someone else’s fire? Are we coming together to be in His proximity and experience His benefits, or is the Spirit of Jesus in you drawing you together with others who also have the Spirit of Jesus in them, so that collectively we assemble as the Body of Christ, and because we, as living stones, are the temple of the Holy Spirit, it’s in our coming together as the Spirit-filled Body of Christ, that the Spirit exalts Jesus and reveals Jesus to us and our community?

Are you born again and is He in you? We can’t assume that because we show up on Sunday, we don’t cuss as much as we used to, and we changed our Spotify playlists to include some worship music, that we have experienced a born again transformation. Has He included you in His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement? Are you born again in His image and likeness and presently seated with Him in heavenly places? [Ephesians 2](#) says that God,

“Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our sin, made us alive *together* with Christ...and raised us up *together*, and caused us to sit *together* in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”  
([Ephesians 2.4-6](#)).

Are you together with Him to the degree that you aren’t just with Him, you are in Him? Do you know that your life is no longer your own...that He bought you with His precious blood?

Are you possessed by God, animated by His resurrection power, grieved by what grieves Him, determined to grow in maturity into the fullness of Christ, gaining victory over temptation and sin, compelled by love to now live a life of purity and holiness and righteousness...is this your present reality?

We must be born again, which means everything you and I inherited from Adam as a result of our first birth has been crucified. This only happens when we repent. When our eyes are opened to see how kind and good and all together other-than God is. True repentance happens when the Holy Spirit causes us to see that God is nothing like we thought He was...and when we see who He actually is, then we see that we're far worse than we thought we were. Repentance happens when we stop excusing our sin and acknowledge it for what it is. True repentance happens when we realize we are so far out of alignment with how God originally designed us, and we confess our brokenness and our identity as sinners. And it's that confession that moves us from merely believing, merely being with Him in proximity, to now being joined to Him in His death... repentance joins us to His cross, where the sons of the first Adam go to die so that they can be joined to the resurrection of the Last Adam.

Are you born again?

### Matthew 7

The reality of what many in the west call "church" is this; multitudes are drawn to the gathering because of Jesus' benefits (and carnal leaders have no problem exploiting this for their own gain), many even believe that He is Lord because of what they see He can do, many will even go so far as to perform signs and wonders that will convince others that they believe Jesus is Lord, but Jesus says in Matthew 7,

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven... Many will come to Me in that day saying, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, have we not cast out demons in Your name, have we not done many wonders in Your name?' And I will declare to them, 'Depart from Me, I never knew you'" (Matthew 7.21-23).

"You did those things illegally because you used My name without being born again into My likeness. You were close enough to Me to learn some tricks, but you're not anything like Me."

Many are drawn to His presence because hanging out in the presence of royalty always has benefits.

The benefits that come from just being *with the King* can't be mistaken for the born again reality that only comes from being *in* the bloodline of the King.

As we move to the end of the age, as wolves and false prophets continue to increase and come in from among the church ([Acts 20:29-30](#)), as God increasingly shakes foundations and continues to expose motives and anti-christ systems within the church, we must be a people that are not moved by things Scripture says will be done by people who are not even Christian.

Paul says to the Corinthians,

“Though I speak with the tongues of angels, but have not love, I am just a clanging cymbal. And though I prophesy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all the faith to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I give all my goods to feed the poor and give my body to be burned but have not love, it profits me nothing” ([1 Corinthians 13:1-3](#)).

We can't be enamored by the things that somehow can still be performed without love... let's be enamored by the fruit of the Spirit. Peace, patience, kindness, goodness, self-control...these things aren't nearly as fun to watch as prophecy and deliverance...but that's only because we see them through our carnal perspective. If we could see what the angels see, we would be astounded at the eternal weight of glory that humility bears. We would stand in awe at how heavy patience and meekness weighs in God's economy. I want to see what God sees.

Jesus people are mature and discerning. They examine the fruit of a life and let that tell them whether the tree is good.

Sure, he can sing the paint off the wall, but does he have the character to hold the weight of the things he is singing about.

Sure, he can prophecy names and birthdays, but does he have the integrity to receive correction and submit to the local church?

Fruit of the Spirit can't be faked...it's only found in those abiding in the tree of life. Anyone can eat of the tree of knowledge and still produce things that look good. But the good of that tree kills just as surely as the evil. We can't be like Eve and be deceived by how beautiful the fruit of the tree of knowledge is. We can't be moved by things that Scripture says can be performed by ones who are not known by Jesus.

When it comes to discerning an individual, prophecy doesn't move me anymore. Healing doesn't move me. Casting out demons doesn't move me. I've seen someone cast out a devil, and then in a matter of weeks see that same person lie and slander another believer. Casting out demons, prophecy, healing...we can't let those things impress us...because Scripture says those are gifts that God gives because He loves people and wants them to live free from demonic influence and disease...those are gifts that have EVERYTHING to do with His love for people and NOTHING to do with a person's character or integrity...and when God gives a gift to someone, like healing, prophecy, etc, for some reason, even if that person turns away, God doesn't take that gift back.

We can't be moved by the manifestation of a gift.

Character moves me. Integrity moves me. Love moves me. The fruit of the Spirit moves me...things like patience and self-control and kindness and faithfulness and gentleness. You have a spiritual gifting? Awesome...steward that gifting in the context of accountability within the local church, do life with a family of believers, and show the community that you have the fruit of the Spirit and not just the gift of the Spirit.

Someone might be able to research my family on the internet and find the meaning of my sons obscure middle name from a blog post, but they can't fake character. They can't fake how they treat their spouse and how they talk to their children. This is why so few want to do church according to God's design...which is a covenant family actually devoting themselves to one another...because everything is exposed in family. Everything is laid bare at the table, it can't be faked...you can't research these things on Facebook and manipulate them from a stage. So rather than actually doing the hard work of being the church that Jesus longs to see in the earth, the one that He can actually be Himself in, multitudes find that it's just easier to find someone who is willing to prostitute his gift for

job security and housing and hire him. Why do the hard work of family and accountability and discipleship when it's just easier to ignore character deficiencies because the prophetic gift keeps the seats, and the offering plates, full?

My prayer for us is that we would always be a mature people who are enamored by the scandal of Christ-like character being formed in an individual, because that can't be faked...not for any length of time anyway. Prophecy, pray for healing, cast out devils, fine...but let me watch you in a disagreement with someone and we'll see if you're in Christ or still in Adam.

Show me long obedience in the same direction. Show me who is discipling you. Who are you doing life with? Who are you accountable to? Who has permission to speak into your life and sit you down if necessary? Let me listen to how you talk about His church... which is His bride...that's going to tell me a lot about whether He's in you or not. Because He's not gonna talk about His Bride the way I hear a lot of people talking about the church.

These are the things that Jesus people recognize in others. Because these are Christ-like qualities that only the Spirit of Christ can produce in someone. Living a life of integrity, loving those around you well, laying down your life for others, giving extravagantly to the church and those around you without being preached to every Sunday about tithing because you know "where your treasure is your heart is also," being content if no one ever knows your name because you know that He knows your name...that's fruit of Jesus living inside of someone.

Are you born again? You may not demonstrate Jesus perfectly, but are you more like Him today than you were last week, last month? Is Christ being formed in you?

#### **Galatians 4**

"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you"  
(Galatians 4:19).

The word for "formed" is *morphoō* (the verb of *morphē*). *Morphoō* means to form or shape. It speaks to not just the outward appearance being conformed to another, but also

the interior CHARACTER being conformed to another. In fact, the emphasis on the change in internal character is so important to the meaning of this word that whatever change in external appearance may happen is always inferior to the internal transformation that takes place.

**Romans 8.29** says that we are predestined to be conformed (*morphoō*) to the image of Jesus. When we are born again, we don't just clothe ourselves in Christ and cover our old character with something new...being born again means there is a total and complete transformation from the way of Adam to the way of Christ...from being defined by our sin to now being defined by the glory of God. **1 Corinthians 11.7** says that we are the image and glory of God. **1 John 4.17** says,

“As He is so are you in this world.”

To be born again, to have Christ formed in us, to be one with Jesus, means that He now lives His life through us, without dissolving our own uniqueness. And His life will always produce His fruit.