

The Blessing Of Being In Christ Jesus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 August 2016

Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0:00] Take your Bibles this morning and turn in them to Romans 8, Romans 8, verse 1! Today is a day that we who are believers gather around the Lord's table.

! We gather in obedience to His instruction to us to celebrate His death on our behalf, His willing sacrifice for our sins and His victory over sin and death.

And over the years, one of the things that I have to confess has always been a marvel to me is the blessing of coming to the Lord's table and being involved again and again in something that, were it not for the enabling of the Holy Spirit, would become rather mundane and rather routine.

And I would appeal at the outset that this morning as you, first of all, attend to the Word of God and then later as you take these elements, that one of the things that you do is that you bathe this process and this time in prayer. Praying for me in obedience to the Scriptures that make it clear that God's people should pray for the man who preaches the Word of God. Let me say this, that I am fully persuaded that the characteristic or one of the characteristics of the Apostle Paul's ministry was that in every case that you work your way through his various epistles, you will find that Paul was consistent in asking other people to pray for him. Do you know what asking people to pray for you indicates? It indicates a recognition of your own frailty and the absolute sufficiency of the work of God in accomplishing that which you cannot do for yourself. How many of you ask people to help you apart from knowing that you have the need? And so we pray for the teaching of the Word of God and particularly for the man engaged in doing it. But we also pray that our own hearts would be responsive, that we would have a heart that is open to hear the text and the truth. And I'm reminded of the statement that is made in Psalm 119. It says this,

Open thou mine eyes that I might behold wondrous truths out of thy law. By nature, we are not good listeners. Would you admit that? We need the help of the Holy Spirit to listen carefully.

[2:50] I would also encourage you to be in prayer that not only would you be a good listener, but that you would allow the Spirit of God to apply the Word directly to your life. And as Pastor Shearer recited 2 Corinthians chapter 3 in his prayer, he referenced the fact that it is through the ministry of the Word of God and hearing it and having it applied to our heart by the power of the Holy Spirit that we grow to be less like who we are and more like Jesus. And so it is our prayer that in the teaching of the Word, we would allow the text to have an effect upon not only our ears, but in particular upon our hearts and our behavior. I want you to look at this passage in Romans chapter 8, and I mark perhaps a journey with a kind of an encouraging statement at the outset. I anticipate in the remainder of this year on those various times where I'm involved in leading the teaching of the Word of God in relationship to the elements. I want to tell you that from here on until I really don't know when, every time that I teach surrounding the subject of communion, I am going to focus on the issue of our union with Christ. I have a long history of doing 1 Corinthians chapter 11 to the point that when people see the elements on the table, the general thought is this, is I know what chapter we're going to be in, I know what book we're going to be in, and I'm just telling you ahead of time, there's a change coming at least for the near future. Let me read the passage and we will pray together.

Romans chapter 8, verse 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Father, we do not pray because it's a habit, but we pray because you are in heaven, and your ear is bent towards your children.

You delight to hear our stammering expressions of thankfulness and dependence, and you are pleased when we pray in accordance with your instruction and your word, and we remind you of promises that you already know, but in doing so, our faith is strengthened and our confidence in you is firmed up.

And this morning we are before you with humility and thankfulness asking that you would give to us a growing affection for the Lord Jesus Christ and a longing for the day that we will see him and be fully satisfied.

[5:57] We pray that both the preaching of the word and the attendance to the word would be marked by the enabling of your spirit that you have granted to those who are believers that are here today.

Father, I know there are also some here in our fellowship that are sitting this morning under the teaching of the word of God who have not come to faith yet. And I would pray that you would graciously bring them to conviction to recognize that the emptiness, the darkness, the deep and abiding sorrow and perhaps the depression of their life is really linked perhaps to the relationship that they lack to unforgiven sin and to the uncertain prospect of eternity separation from you and eternal judgment.

We pray, Father, that you would graciously draw such individuals to see their need and to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ in whom alone is salvation. Help us to delight in the word we who know it and to live it for the glory of our Savior.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. John Newton's hymn, Amazing Grace, probably one of the more popular songs that not only is sung by the church but it's played at many, many funerals. It's kind of woven into the DNA of much of church life and even military business. You know, you have the bagpipes often play Amazing Grace.

[7:45] It's one of the standard things you have. And in relationship to that song there's a little sequence of lines that I want to recite for you here just for a moment and have you think with me regarding it.

John Newton writes this, When we've been there for 10,000 years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

I remember as a younger boy hearing older people talk about heaven and kind of being intrigued a little bit. You know, it's like, they sound like that's a good place to go and I understand as opposed to hell, I can get that.

I mean, I don't like the idea of going to hell and suffering forever and all that. But you know, what am I going to do in heaven? Really? What am I going to do in heaven?

And as a little boy playing in a sandbox, you know, and digging trenches for my plastic soldiers and making roads for my little cars, there was, you know, when supper time came, it was like, hey, come on in.

[8:50] Nah, man, I am really, and I kind of thought to myself, what's heaven going to be like? I mean, you know, sitting around, just being supremely satisfied with Jesus?

And just finding joy and singing songs and learning more about him, it's like, well, yeah, I know, it beats hell.

But it's just, it's way out there. Now, I'm probably not expressing any of the thoughts you've ever had because I've had it said by my wife in particular and by family members that I'm a little different. I confess that. But the truth of the matter is is that there's a chance that most of you have found yourself privately, not admitting it publicly, but you're speculating, what's eternity really going to be like?

How can eternity be so supremely satisfying? And over the years, as I've slowly grown in my walk and affection for Christ, largely because of his persistent ministry and unfailing love, I'm finding that I continue to move more from having an obligation in my relationship to finding delight and satisfaction in it.

[10:23] I remember a conversation not too long ago with an individual about this journey of reading scriptures out of a sense of duty and responsibility and the matter of being obedient because disobedience brings hardship and suffering.

I remember the conversation drifting over into the issue of relationship and the fact that God has slowly continued to produce in my life a sincere affection in the Lord Jesus Christ and a personal satisfaction in the time of devotions and the time of prayer.

My encouragement to the individual in that conversation was that, you know what, you have to believe that that is what the scriptures teach and you begin to prayerfully pursue that unrelenting believing that he will answer the prayer and create in you an affection and an interest that is genuine so that you are brought to the word not because of a sense of obligation and duty but

because of a longing and an interest.

And so it is in regards to this journey that I really want you to think with me about what is here in Romans 8.1.

There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Last time that we gathered around this table we looked at that section there is no condemnation.

[12:01] This time we are going to look at that part in Christ Jesus. It's interesting and just kind of an opening statement to recognize that the Bible really views all of humanity as only in one of two camps.

Right? You are either in Christ Jesus or you are not in Christ Jesus.

profound. You are here this morning either as a person who is in personal relationship with Christ or you're not.

Whether or not you have certain academic accomplishments or whether or not you make a certain amount of money or whether or not you're a citizen of a certain country is really not all that relevant. the issue really boils down to this either you are in Christ Jesus or you're not. So I want us to think this morning about the incredible significance of union with Christ.

[13:11] Those little words in Christ that you find there in Romans chapter 8 verse 1 are far more significant than we actually may be used to thinking about them. D.A.

Carson one of the preeminent theologians of this present day made the statement in broad terms and I'm not reciting him word for word but in general he said this that this business of union with Christ is something it's a belief that most believers don't believe.

Now think about that for me. It's a belief that most believers don't believe. his statement actually is part of a lengthy introduction to his concern that this foundational truth is more appreciated by believers.

I want to tell you that D.A. Carson is not the only one who's commented on the general lack of attention to the doctrine of the believers union with Christ and the significance of that truth in our lives.

I'm not going to rattle off the long list of preeminent men whose writings address this matter but allow a summary to put it this way. Appreciating our union with Christ is essential to better understanding of the gospel and fruitful gospel living.

[14:32] Lock that into your mind. Understanding the doctrine of our union with Christ is essential. It's essential. Now essential things reference things that are pretty important.

Is that right? How many of you recognize that gas is essential for a car? How many of you have ever been stranded on the side of the road because you didn't think it was really as important as you thought?

How many of you have been there? None? Ah, two, three. My wife is in the nursery so I can safely tell this story and don't tell her I brought it up.

my wife at this present time has a great deal of concern when the little light on the dashboard goes bing and turns yellow and it's like immediately I mean she will it's now I mean everything else kind of blurs into the background and she's going to find a gas station and Tim Knoyer is thinking eh.

There are actually two gallons in the tank of a Honda and because of where a Honda can go I immediately reach over and punch the button and say I have X number of miles do you follow that?

[15:51] The way my wife became so nervous about the distance was that we ran out of gas one time all four kids in the car and here we are on our way down to see her father before he passed away and station wagon how many of you remember station wagons to you old guys remember station wagons and we it's like so here I was cutting across the sawgrass in Florida trying to find a gas station and here she was sitting in a car in the middle of the heat with no air conditioning do you understand the joy that that kind of brings to your mind with four sweaty kids and they had long passed the stage of asking are we there yet that was in the rearview mirror it was how long do we have to put up with this well that kind of created this apoplexy about running out of gas and she really kind of essential so when

I tell you that the doctrine of our union with Christ is essential it's more important to us than having gas in our tank given the fact that the doctrine of our union with Christ is so foundational you'll find it in John's gospel and if you continue in our ministry together I can promise you we're going to hit the issue of union with Christ over and over again as we work our way towards the cross and towards the conclusion of that book you'll also find it in the writings of the apostle Peter 1 and 2 Peter

reference to union but it's actually Paul and that's the author of Romans Paul is the one that brings it to the greatest level of attention and over 160 times Paul references our union with Christ can I say that again slowly so you don't miss it over 160 times it is interesting some of the doctrinal issues that we get pretty wrapped up about

I'm all about eschatology but I got to tell you that you will not find references to eschatology in comparison to the issue of union with Christ in fact this issue of union with Christ is just absolutely the center of Paul's teaching and encouragement regarding our relationship with him and the blessing that we have in that so I want you to recognize as we are working our way through this subject we are going to in the months to come as we come back to the Lord's table and touch on this we're going to find Paul using words like in with through to point to the blessing of our union with Christ let me touch practically on some aspects of this before we come to the table for one union with Christ marks our past and our eternal future union with Christ marks our past and our eternal future

I want you to take your Bible if you would you're in Romans but I want you to turn over to Ephesians and we're going to do something that is a little atypical for a normal Sunday morning sermon Sunday morning sermons are where the exposition of the scripture continues uninterrupted for a significant amount of time and as a general rule I don't stop talking until I say amen not all bad what I want you to do is take your Bibles look at Ephesians chapter 1 beginning in verse 3 and on your own I want you to go through some of you do not mark in your Bibles because they're electronic but you can highlight them am I right go ahead and highlight them so what I want you to do I've done it in red ink I've done it in green ink in my hard copy okay

I want you to go through and mark where you see in Christ in him okay in the beloved and I want you to go through Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3 through 14 now I'm not going to spend all of the time waiting for various ones of you who read at different speeds to get there done no go ahead take a minute look at it get the hang of it in Christ in Christ in him now if you don't have a Bible and you don't have a device do you know that this fellowship loves to give Bibles away from our pews so if you don't have a Bible and you want to take one reach out there in front of you and grab a Bible and take it home with you it's there for your blessing and enjoyment Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3 underline circle mark in

[21:17] Christ as you are following in your scripture I am going to read along and I want you to note the in Christ blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places even as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love he predestined us for adoption as sons through

Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will according to the purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him things in heaven and things on earth in him we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory in him you also when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation and believed in him were sealed with the promise the promised

Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory let me say this at the outset that our union with Christ drive it home make it clear make it a point again our union with Christ marks our eternal past and our eternal future our union with Christ is the absolute central feature of this text that we are looking at and so I would say this if Paul the apostle intended for it to receive this level of attention there must be blessing associated with pondering it considering it and allowing the sweetness of that to kind of work its way into your life and to read over it and skip it and to neglect it would be to miss the sweetness of what he has for you

I want you to look at another passage and we are going to come back to Ephesians in just a minute but I want you to turn over to recognize that not only is the passage in Ephesians a passage that hammers this point home but we're going to find it over and over again turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 16 I asked many of you to pray for me last week in relationship to preaching a funeral on Thursday and funerals are always as at least in my viewing they are an opportunity for

me to make the gospel undeniably clear and I can tell you that there are times when Tim Kenoyer stands up to preach at a funeral and he senses from those that he is preaching to a great satisfaction in the encouragement and comfort of the gospel and I love doing that and it's like they're all people yeah tell them about Jesus and they're all fired up about that now there are other times where I have preached sermons and the gospel sounds like nails on a chalkboard to people do you follow what I'm saying how many of you are surprised to hear that the truth of the matter is the gospel can be supremely offensive it is and so when I go to preach at a funeral gospel in particular I ask that people would remember me in prayer and I can preach the sweetness of the gospel

I can also promise people the certainty of judgment that do not know Christ in relationship to the issue of death here's what Paul has to say regarding the resurrection of the saint look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 16 the last part it says for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command with the voice of an archangel and with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first now so you can imagine here I am this individual was a military he had a full military funeral service how many of you have ever been to one of those you know gunfire taps all the whole nine yards so as the taps finished off I was after that and I said this I said Dwight didn't hear those trumpet notes

[27 : 09] Dwight will hear another trumpet sound and there in that passage it says this with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ the dead in in you got that you're either in or you're out you got it it's clear you're in or you're out the dead in Christ shall rise first let me give you a note in relationship to that everyone who dies will not stay in the grave hello everybody hear me say that the dead in Christ and those who are in Christ Jesus will spend forever in eternity that we live and we die in union with

Christ let me have you think with me a little bit more about this issue of living in Christ and I want you to look at 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation let's stop just for a second are you honestly different than you used to be 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation the old has passed away and behold the new has come I think that gospel preaching does a disservice to people when the presupposition is hey listen if you said the prayer and you had somebody dump some water on you or you got dipped or whatever that's automatic guarantee of salvation that's not the truth conversion is a work of

God it's not an activity that individuals kind of well I did this I said that I'm done no no no here's a practical question if you are in Christ Jesus you're different than you used to be now I gotta tell you you will continue growing in grace and I hope that Tim Knoyer is better at 70 than he was at 68 I am in the process of reading through my father's Bible he died at 91 I think that was 91 and I am reading through the Bible that Baptist mid-missions gave him on his 80th birthday when he retired from ministry and I came to the passage there in the Psalms where dad had penned a note to himself he hated the prospect of retiring and a dear friend watching my father kind of struggle with the idea of sitting around and getting rusty had said to him seek peace do good and recited the passage and I stopped and I thought to myself you know what

I can see in the record of what Jesus did in my dad's life of a new creature and a changing person continuing in the journey of grace and so it's important for you to stop and ask yourself hey am I a new person am I changing am I continuing to grow in relationship to that let me have you come to another passage to kind of lock it away in your mind Galatians chapter 2 verse 20 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 I have been crucified with Christ one of the daily battles that Tim

Kenoyer has and every other person here has is an ongoing battle with sin am I right or wrong one of the principal issues in relationship to that ongoing battle in particular in relationship to what it tells me in Romans chapter six is believing the fact of my death with Christ sin has no authority over my life anymore and it has no right to dominate me I am not a slave to sin not because I happen to have had a decent education and learned all the nine things to help me be a neat guy the reason sin has no control over me is I died with Jesus I rose again I'm a new creation I want you to understand not only that the life of the believer is lived in Christ but the death of the believer is covered in this issue

[32:58] I'm not just going to I'll just recite it to you in Revelation chapter 14 verse 13 it says this blessed are all they who what does anybody know can you say it with me blessed are all they who die in the Lord who die in the Lord hello every one of you are going to be room temperature one of these days that's true it's going to happen you are either going to die in the Lord or you're going to die apart from the Lord and the scripture speaks of blessed happy happy I want you to recognize also that every spiritual blessing and grace is framed by our union all that God has blessed me with whether I realize it or not whether I appreciate it or not is linked to my being in Christ go back again to that passage in

Ephesians chapter one and we're going to spend the remainder of our time in this first chapter that I had you do the little exercise in but Ephesians chapter one verse three one of my favorite verses the verse I'm preaching happens to be the favorite one at the moment but this is one of those that sticks right up there with it blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessings in the heavenly places the blessings that I enjoy the blessings that I anticipate truthfully the blessings of being able to look in the rear view mirror and see what he has done in working in my despicable life that's blessing why do I enjoy those things because of my communion and my relationship with him every spiritual blessing in

Christ Jesus I remember as a junior higher my parents had come back from India and we lived for less than a year in Lafayette Indiana and my dad he has an emergency doctor in a hospital and he actually he worked and they provided housing and we lived in a very gritty part of town do you know what gritty means it was well I won't say where it was like living in some parts of the bottoms how's that okay I mean it was a rough neighborhood and I'll never forget one night evening was there and I was in the process of walking home from school late and I decided that I would take a different route and as I was walking through this neighborhood there were three four boys that kind of popped out of the shadows and started coming towards me rather quickly

I have to tell you that I was very nervous can you appreciate that I was very nervous and I got a little fence and started holding it up coming towards me that's when I really got nervous and out of the corner came a boy that I knew in school that I sat with in study hall who suddenly said loudly Tim is with me and those boys just disappeared I don't know what happened I don't know where they went they had a change of mind I was with him and that relationship in that case was protective to me and that is a small picture of the beauty of my relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ blessed be the God and Father that has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus verse six and we close to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved that word blessed that is used here is a word that talks about communicating the idea of extending kindness it's like doing something for the other person actually in the King James and I know that most of us don't have the King James anymore but in the King James it uses the word accepted I suppose in my own frailty and my own struggle with identity the issue of being accepted in Christ Jesus just stands as a blessing but whether you take it as blessed in Christ Jesus or accepted in Christ Jesus here's the undeniable truth that all that we enjoy is linked to this issue of our union so let me ask you when was the last time that you took time to actually count and meditate to ponder to appreciate the relationship and communion the union that you have with

[38:33] Christ listen to me if you don't do it often you are living an impoverished deficient Christian life does that make sense if you don't do it often you are not savoring and appreciating the sweetness of union with the Lord of glory with your Savior the lover of your soul the one who you will someday see and when you see him you will be like him so as the men come and we take these elements I want you to think seriously with me about this issue of union with Christ and consider whether or not it is true for you we are going to sing and take elements together and before we sing let me encourage you to take a moment and pray with me regarding a conscience that is clear and a conscience that has sought forgiveness for unconfessed sin before you come to this table let's pray our father we are thankful for the lord Jesus Christ that has paid the penalty for our sins and given us victory freed us from the debt and the terror of judgment and yet lord it is fitting for us when we take these elements and remind ourselves of what it cost for us to be saved that we think carefully and with the help of the holy spirit regarding our own sinfulness we pray that we would confess and forsake the sins that so easily entangle us there are some here this morning lord that may well be snared by unconfessed and unrepented sin and i pray lord that before they take these elements the bread and the cup that they would come with humility and they would ask you to forgive them of those sins that they as believers would be able to take these elements freely with a

clear conscience i pray also father for those that are here today that do not know jesus that your spirit would convict them that taking the bread and taking the cup in some ways is a public testimony of faith and if they do not know christ that they would let the elements pass and not bear false testimony to what is not true at the same time we are thankful that salvation is the confession of a broken hearted soul admitting sin and asking christ jesus for salvation and that may take place now let our time before this table remind us of the blessing of our grace that we've enjoyed in you and help us to grow in love for you in jesus name amen sing together

behold the lamb who bears our sins away slain for us and we remember the promise made that all who come in faith find forgiveness at the cross cross so we share in this bread of life and we drink of his sacrifice as a sign of our bonds of peace around around the table of the king!

and we will to the of!! and we will in this and we and we and we be! and we we that and we to and we to the and we do to the and we that and we and we and we go!

and we go! we go! And we Yeah! And we So you Thank you.

Thank you.

[44 : 56] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[47 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.