

Union with Christ:

Presence and Power in Christ

Colossians 1: 24-29

Union With Christ Conference

March 16, 2018

Panel One: Union with Christ, what is true of him becomes true of us. Through faith, the Holy Spirit creates this bond with Christ by penetrating, indwelling, immersing, and pervading our lives with his presence.

Martin Luther and Reformers choose marriage as a metaphor for Union with Christ. “My beloved is mine and I am his.” (Song of Songs 2:16). “The seventeenth-century London bookseller Edward Fisher gives a stirring example. Imagining a wise pastor speaking to a shaky, doubt-filled young Christian, he wrote: The marriage union betwixt Christ and you is more than a bare notion or apprehension of your mind; for it is a special, spiritual, and real union. . . . Whence it must needs follow that you cannot be condemned, except Christ be condemned with you; neither can Christ be saved, except you be saved with him. . . . [For] when Christ hath married his spouse unto himself, he passeth over all his estate unto her; so that whatsoever Christ is or hath, you may boldly challenge as your own.” —Michael Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ*

How Do We Do Ministry? Christ’s Presence and Power

Panel Two: William Borden of Yale, “Apart from Christ, there is no explanation for such a life.” —gravestone

Panel Three:

1. The Ministry (v. 24-26): Define: True **Christian Ministry** is the overflow of the Life of God in us. Ministry is not a position, but a relationship with a person, Jesus Christ. We spend time with Christ, Christ reveals himself afresh to us. The overflow of that experience is life, that life encourages and blesses others. Ministry is communicating “life information” to others: why he loves,

what God does, when he speaks, where he works, and how he transforms. Ministry is sharing with others how God has been faithful in our lives and how God will be faithful in theirs. (v. 25) Ministry is encouraging others to trust Christ's work on the Cross, the Father's faithful provision, and the Holy Spirit's consistent guidance. Paul's heart overflows with Jesus as he is imprisoned, rejected, and misunderstood for sharing the Gospel. What is lacking? The Gospel shared throughout the world. (v. 26) The secret that God would indwell both Jews and Gentiles is now manifested

Panel Four: James Hudson Taylor, Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret by Howard Taylor

Panel Five:

2. The Message (v.27): God in his grace has revealed that the Christian life is a person and he lives in and through us. Therefore, I can experience his Divine presence moment-by-moment, hour-by-hour, day after day. **INDWELLING CHRIST**-Christ lives in our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. All that Christ is in the gospels, all that Christ is as the second person of the Trinity, and all that Christ is as Lord now lives in us. Since Christ lives in us, we are never alone. Since Christ lives in us, we have the power to live holy lives. Since Christ lives in us, we can respond (not react) to every life situation according to the will of God. Since Christ lives in us, we can daily experience Him intimately and powerfully by faith. Therefore, we desire all of Him in all of us all the time. **EXCHANGED LIFE**-The exchanged life is the one-sided trade of our sins, inadequacies, and numerous failings for Christ's forgiveness, life-sufficiency, and overcoming victory. Ultimately, the greatest of all exchanges is Jesus Christ, the one who is fully man and fully God, truly innocent and without sin, taking upon himself at Golgotha all our selfishness, rebellion, sin and hatred and substituting his righteousness, forgiveness, restoration and love. We can live the Exchanged Life because Christ by his gracious grace made the Great Exchange of our sin for his righteousness on the Cross.

Panel Six:

3. The Method (v. 28): The method of ministry is teaching Jesus to everyone practically applying him in every life situation so that everyone will grow up mature reflecting the attitudes and actions of Jesus. **ADEQUACY of CHRIST**-In the ancient world, it was believed that you were born with a certain character qualities (or lack thereof) and those qualities were yours for the rest

of your life. The ancient world was fatalistic, you are born the way you are, and you cannot change. Born a thief, always a thief. Born a liar, always a liar. Born with courage, always courageous. However, Christianity breaks forth in the first century and proclaims forgiveness, hope, and real transformation. By the power of Christ, a real change of life and character is offered. Fatalism is rejected. The apostles proclaimed the power of Cross which saved us from the penalty of sin and is saving us from the power of sin and will save us from the presence of sin. The chains which bind us and bondage of sin which control us are defeated by Christ's sacrificial death. Christ's presence, person, power and work is more than adequate to transform us freeing us from our past (2 Cor. 5:9,14, Titus 3:5). "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Panel Seven:

4. The Means (v. 29): The presence and power of Christ does not make us passive, he is the means by which we live the Christian life. We work to the point of exhaustion like an athlete, but by the power of the supernatural "energy" of the Holy Spirit operating through us. **SANCTIFYING GRACE-** Sanctifying grace is Jesus being the desire, ability, and power in us to respond to every life situation according to the will of God. Jesus is our desire for he works in us a hunger for holiness. Jesus is our ability for he enables us to make godly choices. Jesus is our power for he strengthens us to overcome the world, our flesh, and the devil. Grace is the person, Jesus, living his life in and through us empowering us to live a righteous and holy life. Grace is God's heart extending itself towards us as God initiates in us the ability to overcome our deep weaknesses, constant failures, and numerous inadequacies. Grace is not the freedom to sin, but the freedom not to sin. Grace requires, no, demands that we live in obedience to Christ. Grace resists sin, but also lifts us into the presence of God. Grace reveals God to us in all his glory (Titus 2:11, 2 Cor. 9:8).

Panel Eight:

"The Christian life is not merely a converted life nor even a consecrated life, but it is to be a Christ-Life. It is the consuming desire of the Lord Jesus to re-incarnate Himself in the believer." — Ruth Paxson

Re-incarnate to be born again in a new body. Jesus living in our body, sharing his life in and through us.

Union with Christ is the presence of the Father and the power of the Spirit releasing Christ to be himself in us.

Dropbox Files:

Panel Two: William Borden of Yale, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/utpdgnmukab5qvz/Borden%20of%20Yale.jpg?dl=0>

Panel Four: J. Hudson Taylor, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/n3tc0uybe84cf55/Hudson%20Taylor.jpg?dl=0>