

A Bible Study on Union with Christ

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Free Grace Missionary Bible Church

Introduction

Supposedly Martin Luther originated the saying that “justification is the article by which the church stands or falls.” Calvin wrote that justification is “the principal ground on which religion must be supported, so it requires greater care and attention.” (Institutes, III.iii.1). There is no doubt that justification by grace alone through faith alone is essential to a proper understanding of the gospel. The importance of a proper understanding of the gospel is made crystal clear by Paul in his letter to the Galatians:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)

Justification is most definitely a central part of the gospel. The central theme of which is the righteousness of God as Paul wrote in the theme verses of Romans, that in the gospel “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17). And also in chapter 3, “the righteousness of God apart from the law is **revealed**” (Rom 3:21). The righteousness of God is revealed primarily at the cross – look what great agonies and what dreadful death the perfectly righteous Son of God endured because of sin-bearing – the wrath of God that is revealed from heaven is the righteous reaction of a holy God against sin. His wrath is revealed “against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

Surely the gospel deals with righteousness and also with godliness and the truth. But, while justification is fundamental, there is something still more fundamental that we will consider today. This doctrine is one which provides the perfect framework for understanding not only of justification but also of regeneration, adoption and sanctification. This doctrine is more fundamental because it involves the revelation of the nature of God as TRIUNE that comes as part and parcel of the gospel. It is God the Father who sent His one and only eternally-begotten Son, His very equal in nature, character and glory, to take unto Himself a human nature and to be born of a virgin and to redeem a people for Himself. The gospel is fundamentally just as much a revelation of the tri-personal nature of the Triune God as it is of His righteousness and mercy. And this obviously involves the distinction of Persons and the union of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is one God only but praise be to this One God that He is Triune. For we are by nature children of wrath, alienated from this God because of sin, and we need reconciliation. But God’s means of effecting that reconciliation is through union with Christ. And without the distinction of Person between Father and Son as well as their exact equality and perfect union (with the Holy Spirit of course), there could be no possibility of reconciliation. Because the distance between fallen man and the thrice holy God is infinite, our debt is infinite, there can be no Mediator unless that one can “lay His Hands on both God and Man.” Thus, the gospel presupposes at a very fundamental level the necessity of a triune God. Because there must be a Mediator who is both in union with God and in union with Man in order to bring fallen men into reconciliation with God. And so the topic today is union with Christ and how that is fundamental to every aspect of salvation.

The Nature of God

The doctrine of the Trinity, as held by the Catholic Church, cannot be better defined, than in the words of our Confession. It embraces the following propositions: 1. The true unity, indivisibility, and simplicity

of God. 2. The distinction of the three persons due to the eternal relations between them. The Son is the Only-Begotten of the Father, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the same Spirit of both Father and Son. The doctrine of the Trinity sets forth the eternal relation of the Father and the only-begotten Son.

This is set forth from the first verse of the gospel of John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). As set forth in the context of strict monotheism, this assertion requires us to recognize this fundamental truth about the One, True God – That One transcends our comprehension. The Logos, the Word was in the beginning. He is eternal. He was with the Father. The Greek gives the idea of face-to-face: the Father and Son are eternally face-to-face in perfect knowledge and perfect love. Yet this is One God. Not composed but simple in perfect union.

In John 10:30, in which Jesus was disputing with the Jews, He asserts His union with the Father in explicit terms: "I and the Father are one." It is a clear assertion of His own Deity, which the Jews clearly understood as the next verse says, "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him." (John 10:31) with the understanding, as they say to Jesus, "that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:33). Their idea of the Person standing before them was woefully inadequate. They viewed Him as a false prophet, as if He was a mere man. But the Jews had not grasped this from the Scriptures – because it is not as clear in the OT as in the NT. The Person standing before them was the One born of a Virgin. He is Immanuel, God with us. Thus He could truly say, in the deepest possible sense, "I and the Father are one."

This is a marvelous assertion in its profundity however the nature of the unity is not clearly specified. The unity is all inclusive yet we must carefully insist on the distinct of Person. We must never think that Jesus is saying that He and the Father are one person – with the Holy Spirit, they are three infinite, eternal Persons which are distinct and yet one in essence, in mind, will, and purpose. Thus Jesus is able to say and, by the parallelism, to equate His own giving of life and preservation with that of the Father --

(28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:28-29)

Jesus gives life because the Spirit flows from Him. Life flows from the Father and from the Son as the river of God flows from the throne. John's vision reflects the nature of God, in which the Spirit flows from Father and Son -- (1) And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Revelation 22:1). This marvelous unity of Father and Son – the perfect mutual knowledge and perfect mutual love of Father and Son – is wholly Personified in the Holy Spirit. He is the Person who proceeds from the Father and the Son as the pure river of the water of life proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

But Jesus also speaks of His union with the Father in another sense. Earlier, John had written that this Person is "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18) with the present tense

(10) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. (John 14:10-11)

This saying of Christ opens up the idea of Personal Union in a new way. It takes the simple idea of the unity of two things and views it as the compound idea of mutual inclusion. Where before He merely said, “we are one” here Jesus says that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. Thus there is a dual aspect to the union. It is still mind-boggling though because we can follow an infinite chain of inclusion. The Father is in the Son is in the Father is in the Son, and so on, forever. We are humbled even more by the consideration that the Holy Spirit indwells both Father and Son independently and yet there is one Spirit. As Solomon wrote, “a **threefold** cord is not quickly broken” (Ecc 4:12) and here we have a threefold cord which marvelously interweaves itself to an infinite depth into a simple union.

Union with Christ

Just as Jesus opened up the “black box” idea of union between Himself and the Father by explaining it in terms of the mutual inclusion of Persons, so Paul teaches the concept of the believer’s union with Christ in the same way. He speaks of Christ being in the believer and of the believer being in Christ. In this study, we’re going to look at union with Christ in these two terms, and then hopefully look at this union from three angles that Paul provides for us in Romans.

Christ in You

In some of the most intriguing language in the NT, Paul writes that

(26) **the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations**, but now has been revealed to His saints. (27) To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: **which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:26-27)

How many times have we read that huge buildup, which sound like trumpets, and then come to the main point – and kind of have an anticlimactic experience? What do you mean, Christ in you? Some people think that everyone has a little bit of Christ in them but its all or nothing. Some people think you can have Christ as Savior but not as Lord but it is both and. There is One Christ and He is not divided and not divisible. He who is Savior is also Lord. If you do not have Him as Lord, then you do not have Him; neither as Lord nor as Savior.

And it’s not some light matter, whether you have Christ in you or not. 1 John 5:12 says that “He who has the Son has life, he who does not have the Son does not have life.” Each person is either in darkness or has the light of Christ within. Paul says that each of us, as all other people, “[have] the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph 4:18). He even makes it absolute, not just darkened but, “you were **once darkness**” (Eph 5:8). Before having “Christ in you” as that light, there is nothing but darkness. That is the condition of alienation from God into which we are all born. The Lord also gave a stern warning that it is not possible to serve two masters. No one can serve the flesh and serve Christ. As Jesus said, “if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:23 KJV)

In Galatians Paul wrote

(15) But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and **called me by his grace, (16) To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;** immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (Galatians 1:15-16)

and

(19) My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until **Christ be formed in you,** (Galatians 4:19)

And so the first aspect of salvation is this marvelous mystery of union with Christ is -- "Christ in you" which is "the hope of glory" because this God who begins a good work in you will certainly perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:6) and bring every one of His children to glory (Rom 8:29-30).

And so we come to the most clear passage in the Bible on this topic:

(3) But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

(4) In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

(5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

(6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

Notice that the gospel comes upon men as light from the outside. It comes through the ears and the eyes to be processed by the mind. But Paul says that the god of this world has blinded the minds of the whole world. Though the light shine upon them outwardly, it cannot penetrate to the heart, to the will and to the affections because the understanding, appreciation of the significance of truths, and conviction is lacking. Many people seem to come right up to the Gate which leads to life, Christ Himself, but then do not enter in. Jesus' language is challenging, difficult: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). Those who are not able to enter, are not able because of an inward heart condition that prevents them from joining with Christ.

I'm sure we all know the saying of Christ from the discourse of John 6, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:" (John 6:44). And this drawing to Christ is efficacious in every case because he adds, "and I will raise him up at the last day." It is important to see the drawing in relation to full union with Christ – that is, that "coming to Christ" speaks of "us entering into Christ" so as to be found "in Christ" whereas the efficacious drawing is described in 2 Cor 4:6. There we notice a few things:

- i. A parallel is constructed between the command of creation, "let there be light" with the shining in our hearts. The darkness did not ask for the light to shine nor is the darkness in any way compatible with the light. As we were darkness, and as God sovereignly spoke the light into existence, so He by sovereign grace shines in the hearts of some, chosen by sovereign grace from among the multitudes of blind souls.
- ii. The light shines in the heart in conjunction with the light from the outside. The glorious gospel of Christ, the image of God, crucified for sinners, must be proclaimed.
- iii. The light in the heart is from the face of Jesus Christ. This is "Christ in you" the steadfast hope of glory.

- iv. This light gives the knowledge of the glory of God.
 - a. Moses said to the LORD, “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory” (Ex 33:18) but the LORD replied to Him, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exod 33:20). And yet the LORD was gracious and gave Moses a glimpse of His goodness, a mere glimpse of the goodness of the LORD and “Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped” (Exodus 34:8).
 - b. Now, consider that by the grace of God we have the face of Christ, the very image of the God who said, “no man shall see my face and live,” that very face shining in our hearts, to give true light and true understanding to the mind. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and it is the very Wisdom of God shining in the heart. As Moses did, so our only proper response is to make haste and bow ourselves before the LORD.
 - c. The glory of God is His holiness as the angels chant continually in His presence, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord GOD Almighty. This is what no man can see and live. Even the angels must cover their faces in His immediate presence (Is 6:4). God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock and put His hand over Moses so that he would not see the face of God. For Moses, Christ was that Rock and that Hand and it was His face which could not be seen. Now, He is our Rock and our Redeemer and it is the light of His face which shines in our hearts as the first absolutely gracious act of God. When we were dead, He gave us life, and that life is in His Son. Christ in us is the foundation of all our hope for glory.

It is Christ in us who gives us the ability to respond to the gospel, and to receive Christ by faith. Our faith is grounded in the knowledge of the glory of God which shines in the face of Jesus Christ in the heart. That gracious gift of Christ in the heart allows us to see our sin in the light of God’s holiness and to see Christ as the precious Lamb of God in whom we have the forgiveness of our sins. It is Christ in us who gives us the wisdom to fear God and to turn away from evil. He is our wisdom. It is Christ in us who makes us alive to the things of God. And when Christ is formed in us we believe the gospel, we recognize the justice of God in condemning us and we flee to Christ and embrace Him from the heart.

You in Christ

Now that we’ve covered the first aspect of union with Christ, let’s consider the second: “you in Christ.” I’ve tried to briefly show that the first aspect is absolutely essential for the second. That is, no one enters into Christ, no one is able to enter into the second aspect of union with Christ apart from the first work of the Holy Spirit in implanting Christ in the heart. As we read in John 3, unless one is born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God and here we see that having Christ formed within the heart is what it means to be born again. And that is the *sine qua non* of the Christian life. There is no Christian life apart from having Christ within because all of God’s benefits are found in Christ and we cannot enter into those benefits apart from the work of God forming Christ in the heart. What are those benefits?

Paul gives a partial list in 1 Cor 1. He wrote that “of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). He says it is “of Him” – that is, of God – that anyone is in Christ Jesus. No one is in Christ because of his own wisdom because Christ is the only wisdom and we are naturally devoid of this wisdom. So the wisdom which turns from sin and embraces Christ depends on the sovereign grace of regeneration that faith in Christ.

Thus it is “of Him” that ye are in Christ Jesus. And what flows from that union? Righteousness, sanctification and redemption. We can also add adoption to the list.

Redemption

What is redemption? We read about it often in the OT sacrifices. It is the recovery of something which is under an obligation by the payment of that obligation. In the work of Christ, it is His sin-bearing that satisfies our obligation to the Father. We are under an infinite penalty which could never be fully borne by us but which was fully borne by Christ on the cross. The benefits of this redemption are only found in Christ.

The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin but not in any other way except through union with Christ. Though we understand that our sins were borne by Christ on the cross yet we cannot benefit from the work of Christ at a distance. His sin-bearing does not avail those who are outside of Christ. As we are born into this world, God’s elect are children of wrath like all the rest (Eph 2:3) and remain under that wrath until they come into union with Christ.

When one of God’s elect does come into union with Christ, he is washed from his sins in the blood of Christ. There is no sin too great for the blood of Christ to wash away. There is no one with too many sins for the blood of Christ to wash them completely. His death takes away all guilt and this is guaranteed because God raised Him from the dead. If there had been any guilt remaining, Christ would still be in the tomb. But though He was delivered up for our offenses, He was raised again for our justification.

Righteousness

Righteousness is found in Christ. What does this mean? The doctrine of justification explains how we are accounted to be legally righteous – that is, justification is forensic (related to a court of law) – by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. Paul deals with this issue in the first four chapters of Romans. Justification is by grace alone through faith alone. And this is a very necessary understanding because truly justification is the doctrine by which the church stands or falls.

However, there is a sense in which this view of justification is not quite adequate because it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking in terms of ledgers in which there is a transfer from one to the other apart from a vital union. The idea that Christ could be at one end of the courtroom and the guilty sinner at another end such that the righteousness of Christ is transferred to the sinner across the room has led Roman Catholics and many modern theologians have claimed that it is not possible to transfer righteousness from one account to another. But that discussion misses the underlying reality set forth in the Scriptures.

“*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*” (Rom 8:1) makes it clear that it is those who are in Christ who are accounted righteous. This indicates the progress that was made in Paul’s argument in Romans from chapter 4 to chapter 8. In chapter four, he set forth the one view of imputation but in Romans 8:1 he arrives at the necessity of viewing imputation in terms of union with Christ. We will touch upon this point again in a little later.

Adoption

The doctrine of adoption is precious because it teaches us how we are brought into the number to enjoy the liberties and the privileges of the children of God. John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). What a glorious concept! But how are we brought into the number? Is it apart from Christ? Or is it "in Christ"?

Paul wrote that God the Father "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:5-6). We are adopted through and in Jesus Christ as sons. We are not made children of God by means of being born again but rather through being born again we join with Christ and so we are accepted in the Beloved, and called sons of God because of our union with His Only-begotten Son.

Sanctification

Finally, sanctification is in Christ. Here we understand the crucial distinction between the objective and the subjective. We will distinguish between positional and progressive sanctification. Both kinds of sanctification are found in relation to union with Christ but there is a very important difference between them. Positional sanctification has to do with our being in Christ – believers in Christ are literally "set apart" in Christ. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be saints*" (1 Cor 1:2) and he generally addresses his letters in this way, "to the **saints** which are at" Ephesus or Philippi or Colosse. Now surely those men were sinners just like us but Paul addresses them as "set apart in the Lord Jesus Christ" in terms of their positional sanctification.

The doctrine of progressive sanctification is quite distinct from positional sanctification. In this case, we do not look at the objective condition of being "in Christ" but to the subjective condition of having "Christ in us." Peter mentions that we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Peter 1:23). And John advances our understanding even further when he writes, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). This seed is the Word of God which is Christ, Living and Active, and which must grow in us.

In the parable of the sower, "he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Matthew 13:23) Luke adds that "that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). This is nothing less than the maturation of the divine life which was implanted in us to bring about our regeneration. Sanctification is, in effect, the conformance of our inner life to the image of Christ. But it is an inside job that is carried out by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with our own thoughts and actions. The seed that remains in us must be nurtured through prayer, reading the Scriptures, repentance and believing the gospel.

Paul's Threefold Illustration of Union with Christ

We all know that Paul's argument in Romans begins with the demonstration of the universal wickedness and condemnation of all mankind, both Gentile and Jew. He then sets forth the doctrine of forensic justification in Romans 4. Then, in chapter 5:1-11 he presents a kind of summation and reflection of the previous doctrine. "Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God," and so forth. Then, in Romans 5:12-21, through chapter 8 he presents a sequence of seemingly unrelated doctrines. At least, most commentators seem to view them as ad hoc presentations of various facets of the gospel with no unifying theme.

Today, I will present the idea that in Romans 5:12-21, 6, 7 and 8 Paul presents to us the essential nature of union with Christ and how that reality plays out in various aspects related to salvation. This is not a matter of emphasis and doesn't affect the individual doctrines taught. It does, however, give considerable insight into what Paul is driving at in Romans. For instance, most people realize that Romans 6 is about sanctification but the key insight in the chapter is that it is sanctification by union with Christ.

Romans 5:12-21

When we consider the idea of Federal Headship taught in Romans 5:12-21, namely that every person is either "in Adam" and under condemnation or "in Christ" and justified by the righteousness of Christ. Paul wrote, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). This is nothing other than the doctrine of free justification in terms of union – those who are in Adam are guilty because of their union with Adam and dead in trespasses and sins. That guilt is by imputation grounded in a real union, just as justification is by imputation grounded in a real union. Thus, Romans 5:12-21 examines the implications of union with Christ in His Federal Headship as it works out to the justification of those in union with Him.

By contrasting Christ with Adam, as two Federal Heads, Paul teaches that we must be under one of the two Federal Heads – either we are under Adam or under Christ. There is no benefit of Christ to those who are in Adam and so having Christ as your Federal Head is what it means objectively to be in union with Christ.

Romans 6

Whereas the first picture of union with Christ captures the blessed doctrine of justification by union with the Federal Head, the obvious implication is that this is great news! Now that that is settled, we can get back to sinning with impunity. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1). But Paul presses the union with Christ once again. He urges that we recognize that having Christ as our Federal Head presupposes union with Christ, but union with Christ is the very thing that forces the response, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2).

Our union with Christ is not some abstract idea, such that He becomes our Federal Head and we live as we please, disconnected from that Head. That idea violates the nature of the union, in which if we are in union with Christ at all, we are in union with Him in His death, burial and resurrection. And that is what

Paul urges upon us – he uses the image of baptism to express the union but it is not water baptism in view but the actual union with Christ which carries with it the spiritual implications Paul expresses.

Because Christ has died to sin, if we are in union with Him, then we have died to sin. And how can anyone who has died to sin live any longer in it? This is the same idea that John expressed in 1 John 3:9, those who are in union with Christ have Christ within and cannot continue in sin.

To put this in the terms of this study, in Romans 5:12-21 Paul gives us the consequences of believers being “in Christ” but in Romans 6 makes it clear that the objective standing is never apart from the full union with Christ which eliminates the idea that we can continue in sin that grace may abound.

Romans 7

Chapter 7 of Romans is broken into two sections. The first section presents the idea of union with Christ in terms of marriage. This is a beautiful passage because it uses the picture of marriage which is the most intimate form of union of the three. Paul’s argument starts with the fact that we are married to the law by nature. That is, we are bound by the covenant obligation to bear the penalty for our guilt. There is no escaping this necessary connection between sin and punishment in light of the righteousness of God. “For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward” (Hebrews 2:2). And who is the person who will escape the righteous judgment of God? The idea of Romans 7 is that the only hope is to “become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Romans 7:4).

The second section of Romans 7, from v. 7 to the end of the chapter is a case study in the conversion that Paul describes. It is written of himself but is applicable to everyone who comes to Christ. The first part from vv. 7-13, is of the unregenerate person under the bondage to the law. In v. 14, we see the dawning awareness of the utter futility of attempting to keep the law, given that we are already under condemnation. From v. 15-25, a new nature is seen. This is the formation of Christ in the heart which opens Paul’s eyes to the overwhelming condition of being sold under sin, utterly unable to keep the law. This is equivalent to the law being written on the heart (Jer 31, Heb 8,10). That law which was external to the unregenerate man, which stood over him condemning him does not die but rather is satisfied vicariously by Christ – as the husband pays the bride price for his spouse – and that which stood over to condemn has now been written inwardly in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. That breaks the power of sin over the individual and gives the ability and the strongest possible desire to flee to Christ. And Christ formed in the individual leads inexorably to that individual seeing the overwhelming need for Christ and fleeing to Him as the only hope. Everyone in whom this work of God is performed, become dead to the law and alive to God in Christ must experience moments like Paul’s.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7:24-25)

There is no easy way to come to God. This is not a decision made by the individual – it is the decision of God to sovereignly “detach” the sinner from the obligation under the first covenant by interposing the Mediator on His behalf and forming Christ in the inner man by purest, most marvelous grace.

This leads to Paul to the full union with Christ, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). In the case study of Romans 7, to illustrate the doctrine of marriage with Christ, we see then that there is a change in Romans 7:14 which is Christ implanted in the heart. Paul elaborates the consequences of that sovereign work in terms of the inner struggle which takes place following the implantation of Christ, between the new nature and the old man. The new nature inexorably flees to Christ and the full union is made up.

Well, the full union is seen to be already made up and yet there is more to come. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Romans 8:21) We will be fitted with new bodies which are like unto Christ's glorious body. We will be able to see the face of Christ. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1 Corinthians 13:12) On that day, the face of Christ shining in our hearts will be all-in-all for us and reflected in His face into which we will be blessed to gaze forevermore. Amen and amen.