

# John Sproule Ministries, Inc.

Newsletter, July 2005

**A Word From the Word.** The Apostle Paul's favorite expression was ἐν Χριστῷ ("in Christ"). He uses it often, especially in the prison epistles. When regenerated, a person believes the Father's divine record about His Son and places faith in the Person and Work of that wonderful Savior and, in love, receives from the Father and the Son eternal life (Eph. 2:4-9). Thus begins our new life "in Christ." Most of us believe that. We just don't think very much about what it means to be "in Christ," i.e., our UNION with Him. We slide by this truth throughout our Christian lives without thinking very much about it.

An old Scottish preacher once said that "union with Christ" is a brief name for all that the apostles mean by "salvation." This same truth is seen in the Old Testament as it reflects O.T. believers and their relationship to God. In **Psa. 90:1**, the Psalmist writes, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations" which is an expression of the relationship of God's people who enjoyed the blessings of God and felt themselves "HOMED" in God. Wordsworth has a wonderful expression, "God who is our HOME." That's what Paul spells out in his theology of the N.T. He spells out what it means to have a God who is our HOME! Paul does this by using the expression "in Christ Jesus." Even we reflect this same truth when a dear believer dies and we say, "She went home to be with the Lord." It's a wonderful, comforting thought for believers to realize that their true home is with the Lord . . . it is the goal of redemption!

Let me briefly suggest a few implications of this blessed truth of our "union with Christ." **First**, this inseparable union which believers have means **eternal life**. As long as sap flows through a plant the branches shall live. Even so, as long as the life of God flows in our Lord's person and being, we who are united to Him shall have life. He Himself has said, "Because I live, you shall live also." **Second**, this union demands our love and liberality toward all the saints. All believers are "in Christ," and our relationship to one another is a relationship of individuals who are united to Christ. We should minister to one another as those who share the same life in Christ. . . helping fellow believers who are in need . . . loving them . . . caring for them. To needlessly harm or hurt another believer is to harm or hurt the Lord Jesus Christ! (Please read our Lord's words in **Matt. 25:40** at the future judgment of the nations and in **Acts 9:4** to Paul – to do anything for or against one of Christ's sheep is to do it for or against Him!). My, how that truth would change much of our church behavior! **Third**, in facing death how wonderful it is to realize that we are united to Christ! He is the "firstfruits" of those who will rise from the dead in a glorified body. What a marvelous expression, "firstfruits" . . . it means that all those who are "in Christ" will one day also be raised! On that day He will empty every graveyard on earth of the bodies of believers. Hallelujah!

Now, allow me one final thought about this blessed "union with Christ." Because believers are united to Christ, He wants and wills for us to be **eternally present** with Him. This is stated so beautifully in our Lord's high priestly prayer in **John 17:24**, "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me." Richard Hooper said it so well, "The Lord Jesus is, if I may so say, so fond of their presence and, therefore, is not willing to be in heaven unless they may be with Him . . . as though heaven were no heaven unless the saints should take up their abode there with Him." As you doze off tonight, sleep on that blessed thought!!

**A Word From the Ministry.** Our preaching schedule appears below. I continue to improve in my health, but I so want each of you to be praying for these ministries.

August 7 – Valley Bible Church, AM, Sumner, WA

Aug. 7-12 – Park of the Pines Bible Conference, Kent, WA

Sept. 13 – Pastors Conference, Anniston Bible Church, Anniston, AL

Oct. 2-3, Grace Bible Church, Gadsden, AL

Nov. 6, Anniston Bible Church, Anniston, AL

(TBA, late September, Berean Covenant Church, Columbus, GA)

Ginny and I send all of you our love and gratitude for your prayers and support. From our hearts to yours.

John & Ginny Sproule