

Union

Romans 6:1-14

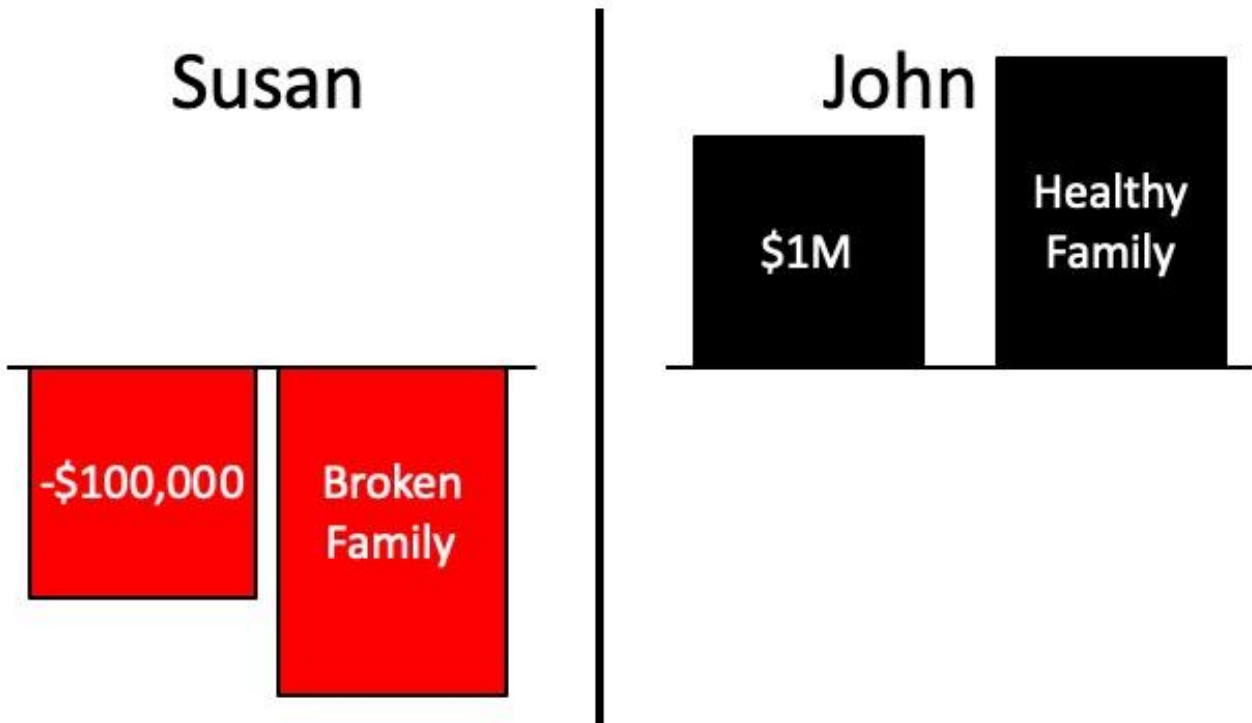
This is one of the most important and inspiring passages in all of Scripture. This is where Paul teaches the meaning of baptism. This is where we see the phrase “**united with him,**” as we’ve been learning in our verse of the month

“For if we have been **united with him** in a death like his, we will certainly also be **united with him** in a resurrection like his.” Romans 6:5

What does it mean to be UNITED WITH CHRIST? What does it mean TO YOU to be ONE with your Lord and Savior? Notice this is a double unification – first a past union with His death and second a future union with Him in His resurrection. The future union is dependent on the past one with that big IF. “IF we have been united with him in” His death, THEN we will also be united with Him in “a resurrection like his.”

The best human analogy for this UNION is **marriage**. A man and woman make solemn vows to one another and God unites the two into one. Husband and wife become a UNION of hearts, souls and lives.

- Consider a fictitious couple:

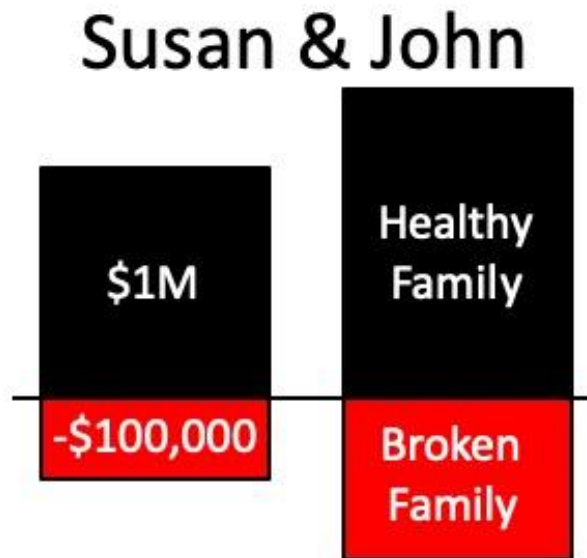


- Let’s say ***Susan was raised in a poor family*** but she married ***John who was from a wealthy family***. They met in college and after they graduated they got married. Susan had \$100,000 in debt. John graduated debt free and had \$1,000,000 in a trust fund. Susan was

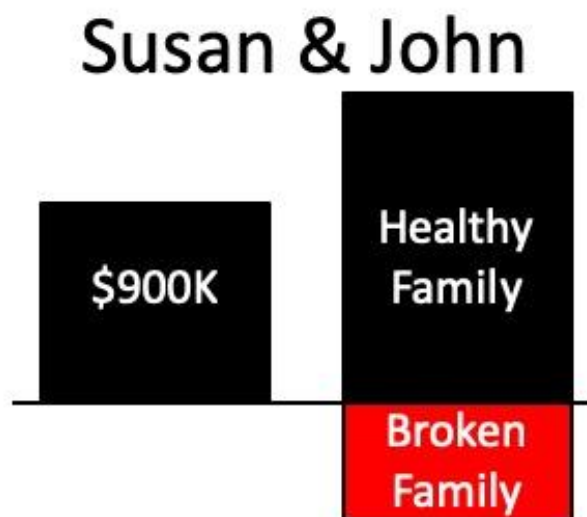
from a broken home. Her parents had split up when she was young and she didn't really have any contact with her family members.

- **John had a strong, loving, Christian family** that enjoyed holidays together and called and texted each other frequently. Since I'm just making this whole thing up, John's family owned the Disney Polynesian Resort - so they could stay there anytime they wanted and visit all of the Disney parks for free.

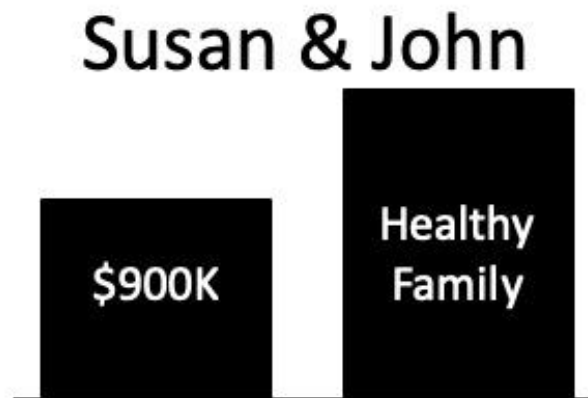
Think about what happened for Susan the day she married John.



- Her \$100,000 debt became his in the same moment that his \$1,000,000 trust fund became hers. Being a wise money manager, **John immediately paid off her debt** - zeroed it out. Gone. She was immediately debt free! Imagine how that would feel!



- But that wasn't all - Susan had ***the comfort and assurance of John's commitment*** to her for the rest of her life. She not only had financial strength and security for the first time in her life, but she had relational security as well. Before this the main people in her life had let her down - her parents weren't there for her. But John had promised to love and cherish, to honor and protect her "as long as we both shall live." She was SAFE in his love.



- On top of all of that, she immediately had access to ***everything else that was John's***. His family became her family - they welcomed her in and insisted she call them "Mom and Dad." She was "one of the kids." Later when John and Susan had children they were all heirs of the family fortune. The Disney Polynesian Resort, the ski boat, the family gatherings, the phone calls, the Instagram interaction, the love and affection - it was all hers because she had married John!

The relationship of the Christian to Jesus is presented in these terms - a permanent, loving union - **a COVENANT relationship**. To be united with Christ is to pledge yourself - everything you are and have to Him and ***to receive from Him EVERYTHING HE HAS***. When you call on Jesus to forgive your sins and become your Savior and Lord you are asking Him to marry you. We'll come back to this critical point at the end. But notice the big IF Paul puts in verse 5:

"For IF we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his." Romans 6:5

Do not assume you are one with Jesus. Are you sure there was a wedding? Are you sure you made your vows clearly to Him? In premarital counseling the first thing I tell a couple is ***"You're not married until you're married."*** That may sound obvious but it's tremendously important because young men and women who think they're in love become awfully tempted to ACT like they're married in certain ways before they are actually married. So I tell couples, don't act like you're married until you're actually married - and when is that? **AFTER you say your vows.**

Everything else in a wedding is window dressing. The songs, the dresses, the ushers, the unity candle - even the rings. It's all just tissue paper in the box. **What makes you married is the**

VOWS you say to each other. Before you make those vows - you are not married. After you say those vows - whether you are happy with your choice or not - you ARE married “until death do you part.”

Let’s walk through this beautiful passage in Romans 6 and we will see the **six wedding gifts** the Lord gives you ***on the day you make your vows to Him***. They come in two categories - ***His life and His love***. If you are united with Christ, you have His life and His love. I want you to write it down in the first person - “If I am united with Christ, I have His life and His love,” - because this is personal. It doesn’t get any more personal than this.

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

“Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” Romans 6:1-2

Romans 6 is **Paul’s answer to a question** that is bound to come up when you begin to understand ***the doctrine of justification by faith alone***, which we’ve been studying the last few weeks. If we really are saved entirely on the basis of the work of Christ and zero percent because of our own works, is it just a free for all? ***Can we just live however we want?***

I mean, if I sin more and Jesus forgives me more, doesn’t that actually glorify Him more because He has that much more to forgive? Paul’s answer could not be any more forceful. “By no means” doesn’t carry a lot of emotional zing in English - but the Greek there is the strongest negation there was. We might say, **“ABSOLUTELY NOT!”** in all caps, with three exclamation points and three three asterisks on either side, triple underlined.

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

“Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? *** ABSOLUTELY NOT!!! *** We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” Romans 6:1-2

The rest of this section is Paul’s explanation - entirely based on this doctrine of our union with Jesus. It’s an appeal to **our new identity**, our new position, our new relationship with Jesus. We are not who we were. We were bought with a price - the precious blood of Jesus - and now we belong to Him. “We have died to sin. How can we live in it any longer?”

Remember, before you called on Jesus to save you, you were DEAD IN YOUR SIN. After Jesus forgave your sins ***you were no longer dead IN sin but were suddenly dead TO sin***. Look at verse 3:

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” Romans 6:3

Baptism does not save you but it is a beautiful **symbolic picture of your salvation**. *When you go under water* it represents your old, sinful self being killed with Jesus and buried with Him. What would happen if you went under water and stayed there? I realize it's a little grim, but that's the point. You would die. Baptism is first a symbol of death. The old YOU died. You were baptized first into His death.

To be baptized means *to be IMMERSED in, to be saturated in*. This is why we practice baptism by immersion. You go all the way under water and the water touches every part of you. Think of that phrase, **"baptized INTO CHRIST JESUS."** Jesus is the fountain of living water and when you commit to Him you are immersed in His entire life - *you step into that fountain and it touches every part of you!*

You step into the LIFE of Jesus. At the moment you called on Jesus in faith you moved from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ.

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Rom. 6:4

When a sinner turns from his sin and puts his faith in Jesus, his old self is buried with Jesus and a new person comes to life. Picture the day you knelt before Jesus, when you bowed your head and asked Jesus to save you - whether you were 4 years old or 44. In that moment you were transported through time directly to the cross. Look at verse 6:

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

*"For we know that **our old self was crucified with him...** if we died with Christ, we believe that **we will also live with him.**"* Rom. 6:6,8

The old sinful, selfish, idolatrous, **rebellious YOU was nailed to the cross**. All of your sins - past, present and future, were placed upon Jesus and died with him there on the cross, then they were sealed away with him in the tomb. So when Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, your sins - your sinful old self - your flesh - did not come out of the tomb with him. Rather, your NEW SELF came to life with Him!

In that moment of faith **you were BORN AGAIN**. You became a NEW CREATION - the old you was removed and God breathed life into your Spirit. To be united with Christ is to have HIS LIFE. Three gifts immediately come with this ultimate gift of life: His perfection, power and purpose.

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

1. His Perfection

“For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are no longer under the law, but **under grace.**” Rom. 6:14

This is what we've seen the last three weeks in Romans 1 through 3: the doctrine of **JUSTIFICATION**. *Outside of Christ all people are UNDER SIN* - they are confused, controlled and consumed by it. Sin defines and directs them. They belong to it. Sin is their master. But for the Christian, the whole situation has changed. Sin is no longer the controlling force - Jesus is. Sin is no longer the defining feature of your life - Jesus is.

Brother, sister - *the sin of your past does not define you - **Jesus does.*** To be united with Jesus is to be united with His PERFECTION. When you committed to Jesus in faith, when you said your vows - He took all of your DEBT and gave you credit for all of His righteousness. You are not under sin anymore, but now and forever you are under God's grace.

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

1. His Perfection

“**The righteousness of God** through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe... and are **justified** by his grace as a gift.” Rom. 3:22,24

To be justified is **to be DECLARED RIGHTEOUS**. Remember the gospel - in Christ we can not only SEE the perfection of God but we can RECEIVE that very perfection. At the moment you trust in Jesus **you receive CREDIT for His perfection.**

It's just like our fictitious married couple. *Susan's debt was immediately wiped out* the day she married John. It was free to her but quite expensive to John. Her debts became his and his assets became hers. The same thing is true with Jesus. Your debts become His - all of them. All of your sins, past, present and future - are transferred from your account to Jesus' account. And all of His assets - His perfect righteousness - is transferred to your account. But that's only the beginning.

Susan not only became a millionaire that day, but *she was welcomed into a family with real buying power*. She had access to connections and business opportunities, investment capital.

Can you imagine if, a week after their marriage, Susan was out on a street corner begging for change - or worse, selling her feminine services for money? John would pick her up and say, “What are you doing? *That's not who you are anymore!* You're a member of our family and we have all kinds of ways to make money and take care of things...” To be united with Jesus we first receive His perfection and in that same moment we receive His power.

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

2. His Power

“Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, **do not let sin reign** in your mortal body.” Rom. 6:11-12

Should the Christian go on sinning? Should we go back to our old ways of following our sinful desires? Of course not! That’s not who we are anymore! Sin no longer reigns over us - we have a new Master and **we have new POWER to resist sin** and to live for righteousness!

For the non-believer they have no choice about whether sin will reign over them. Sin DOES reign over them. It owns and controls them. They are UNDER SIN. **But the Christian is UNDER GRACE - free from the controlling power of sin and filled with the limitless power of the Holy Spirit!**

Paul prays that believers will know and experience this power:

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

2. His Power

“In my prayers... that you may know... what is **the immeasurable greatness of his power** toward us who believe... that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead.” Eph. 1:19-20

How could a Christian continue living in sin? You have been declared RIGHTEOUS - you’ve been given credit for the PERFECTION of Jesus! On top of that, **you’ve been filled with the Spirit of the Living God**. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you!

Think of the power that was necessary to raise the dead. When Jesus stood outside of the tomb of Lazarus he challenged Mary and Martha to believe in Him. Jesus is the One who can raise the dead. He commanded Lazarus to come out. He raised others from the dead. And He proved His ultimate authority by walking out of the tomb Himself.

HIS POWER - that raises the dead - lives in us. This is why He told His disciples it was BETTER for them that He go away – so He could send His Spirit and they would do EVEN GREATER THINGS than He did! To be united with Christ is to be united with His life which brings the gifts of perfection, power and the third wedding gift is purpose.

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

3. His Purpose

“Do not offer any part of yourself to sin... but rather **offer yourselves to God**... and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.” Rom. 6:13

Why do we continue to offer ourselves as servants to our old, sinful desires and to this world? We have a NEW LIFE - a new IDENTITY in Christ. And with that new life comes a new PURPOSE.

The mission of Jesus becomes OUR mission. His message becomes our message. "We no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died for us and rose again!"

- Jesus came to serve - so we live to serve.
- Jesus came to proclaim freedom for people enslaved to sin - so we live to proclaim freedom in Christ!
- Jesus came to bring the light of God's glory into a dark and sin-filled world. So our mission is to carry that light - the light of Jesus' name - to the ends of the earth.
- God created us to BE the Light and commissioned us to bring that light to the world. This is who we are - and who we are determines what we do.

When Kristin and I started dating our joke is that ***it was a riches to rags story***. Her boyfriend before me was quite wealthy - like he owned his own airplane as a college student kind of wealthy. I was driving a hand me down Dodge Colt. So when we got married it was not a union that brought her any money from me and my youth pastor / glorified internship salary. But she was stuck with me so since we were united in marriage she had my LIFE. I certainly did not have perfection to offer her; quite the opposite. Nor did I have any power to provide, at least financially speaking. But I did have PURPOSE. And by marrying me, my purpose in life to serve and mobilize the local church - became her purpose.

The same thing is true for us as believers. When you commit your life to Jesus in faith, His mission becomes your mission, because His life is your life.

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

3. His Purpose

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to preach good news to the poor..." Luke 4:19

"The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost." Luke 19:14

Jesus came to preach the Kingdom of God - a message that is about HIM as the King. He came to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and to accomplish salvation through His death and resurrection. He came to serve and to sacrifice in order to save.

Now His mission is OUR mission. And He explicitly sent us out with these orders - to make disciples of all nations. This is why Paul said in Philippians:

If I am United with Christ I have His Life:

3. His Purpose

"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21

For the Christian, **Jesus IS your life.** ***Saving faith is a TRADE.*** You trade your old life, independent from Jesus, for a new life BOUND to Him. You CANNOT receive eternal life from

Jesus without becoming ONE with Jesus. Jesus does not give His wedding gifts to people who do not pledge themselves to love Him and follow Him and serve Him. It is all or nothing with Jesus.

Have you made your vows? Is Jesus your life? If you have called on Jesus and committed your life to Him then you HAVE His perfection, His power and His purpose. You have HIS LIFE! All that was yours is now His – and all of that was in the debit category. And all that was His is now yours – all of that was in the credit category.

We are just halfway! If you are united with Christ you not only have His life, but you also have His LOVE! This comes with three more wedding gifts we will cover more quickly.

If I am United with Christ I have His Love:

4. His Protection

“For we know that our old self was crucified with him that ***the body ruled by sin might be done away with*** that we should no longer be slaves to sin.” Rom. 6:6

The main thing ***Jesus protects us from is our sin and the judgment that sin deserves***. Your old, sinful self was taken from you and nailed to Jesus on the cross. Your old BODY – the old YOU – that was ruled by sin, has been DONE AWAY WITH. How? It was crucified with him! To what end? That we should no longer be slaves to sin. Jesus paid our ransom. He laid down His life to redeem us from our slavery to sin. And so Romans 8:1 is true for us:

If I am United with Christ I have His Love:

4. His Protection

“There is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Rom. 8:1

True love protects and provides. The love of Jesus is the ultimate love. He protects us from the gravest danger humanity faces – the deadly disease of sin. He offers the only shelter from the coming wrath of God – the condemnation your sin deserves. He not only protects you – He also provides for you!

If I am United with Christ I have His Love:

5. His Provision

“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, ***we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his***.” Rom. 6:5

Notice that ***the believer is IMMEDIATELY given new life in Christ***. At the moment of saving faith you were born again as a new creation in Christ – the old has gone, the new has come. But this promise is FUTURE. We “WILL certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like His.” Jesus is the firstborn from among the dead.

When believers die we are not immediately resurrected. Think how THAT would make the news! 75 year old saint buried at Poplar Bend stuns crowd by climbing out of her grave! It would seem like a zombie apocalypse... No – when believers die we go straight to heaven in a spirit form, waiting for the future resurrection of all of the dead that will take place when Jesus comes back.

But that is our blessed hope! Paul writes of this resurrection in 1 Cor. 15 -

If I am United with Christ I have His Love:

5. His Provision

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet... the dead will be raised imperishable... the mortal clothed in immortality.” 1 Cor. 15:52-53

That is called Humanity 2.0 – really **Humanity Infinite.0** That will be your eternal UPGRADE. Imperishable. That resurrected body will be yours forever and forever. It will never age. It will never have aches and pains. There won't be any injuries, arthritis or carpal tunnel. We will all be 25 forever. Immortal.

That is the promise of Romans 6:5.

If I am United with Christ I have His Love:

5. His Provision

“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, **we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.**” Rom. 6:5

When Jesus rose from the dead, he could not die again. He was still fully human but he was human in a GLORIFIED form. ***That is our future!*** To be raised just as Jesus was raised. But Jesus promises so much more than just getting upgraded bodies. He provides us with EVERYTHING we can imagine and so much more!

If I am United with Christ I have His Love:

5. His Provision

“Who has blessed us in the heavenly places with **every spiritual blessing in Christ...** in love He predestined us to be adopted as his sons...” Ephesians 1:3,5

To be united with Christ is **to have EVERYTHING that He has** – every spiritual blessing. Paul goes on in Ephesians to talk about being chosen, adopted as the sons and daughters of God. This means we have access to the Father – and we have fellowship in the family of God. Everyone else who belongs to Jesus is a brother and a sister to us. This is the final wedding gift we will talk about today – having the love of Jesus means HIS People are our people, His family is our family.

If I am United with Christ I have His Love:

6. His People

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” Eph. 2:19

To be united with Jesus is to be a part of His family. Jesus is our bridegroom. God is our Father. The Spirit lives inside of us. Believers throughout history and all over the world are our brothers and sisters and will be forever. We are ONE BODY – ONE church – ONE Family – forever.

We could list off 1,000 more gifts that come from our union with Christ. Being united with Christ is the primary gift that brings with it all the other gifts! So that is the question we will close with. Notice the big fat IF in verse 5:

If I am United with Christ I have His Life & His Love:

“For IF we have been united with him in a death like his, **we will certainly also** be united with him in a resurrection like his.” Rom. 6:5

Have YOU been united with Jesus in His death? Have you made your vows to Him? Have you fallen on your knees before King Jesus and begged Him to take your sin debt upon Himself? Have you cried out to Him for His perfection to become yours?

You’re not married until you’re married. Can you honestly say that you are married to Jesus? You are His and He is yours? When was that wedding day? When did you say your vows? If you can’t think of a time you pledged to love and trust and serve and honor and obey Jesus for the rest of your life then you probably never did.

Don’t put off that question – resolve it today. Jesus has proposed to you. His hand is outstretched to you – offering everything He has, everything He is. He will give you His life and His love. Marry Jesus and He comes with a truck load of wedding gifts: His perfection, power and purpose, His protection, provision and people.

If you belong to Jesus then you HAVE every spiritual blessing in Him. To have Jesus is to have EVERYTHING.

Let’s pray and sing of the AMAZING LOVE of Jesus –

And Can it Be