

Unit

2-20-17  
Feb. 2:14

COMRADESHIP IN CHRIST AND WITH CHRIST.

This subject about which I have been asked to speak gets bigger the more you think about it. It practically covers the whole of the Christian life. "A man in Christ" is the most profound expression used by the Apostle Paul to describe a Christian. A great Bible scholar (James Denney) has said that "it denotes the most intimate possible union, a union in which the believer's faith identifies him with Jesus in His death and resurrection, so that he can say, I live no longer, but Christ liveth in me."

No doubt the best illustration in all history of our subject is Paul himself. He called himself a man in Christ. Again in writing to the Corinthians he said, "Timothy-- shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ." And to the Galatians he said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Another such a man in Christ was Augustine of the fourth century, who after Paul was probably the greatest mind of Christian antiquity. We are told that when he "shortly after his conversion, was accosted on the street by a former mistress of his sinful and licentious days, he turned and walked in the opposite direction. Surprised, the woman cried out, 'Augustine, it is I.' But Augustine, proceeding on his way, cried back at her, 'Yes, but it is not I.' He meant that there was a new Augustine, and that this new Augustine would not tempt temptation by walking on the old territory of danger." "Wherefore", said Paul, "if any man is in Christ he is a new creature."

Every real Christian, being united to Christ by faith, may have glorious experiences in comradeship with him. ~~Ten such experiences are suggested in ten passages of scripture which I will mention.~~ May I mention briefly ten such experiences, all ~~mentioned~~ suggested in the New Testament.

*John 1:35*  
1. Immediately after conversion. After Andrew and John had heard the gospel message, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and had followed Jesus, and had come and had seen where he abode, they abode WITH HIM that day. Think what that first day with Jesus must have meant to those new disciples. Does not that tell us why Andrew became a soul-winner immediately, finding his own brother, and bringing him to Jesus? Does not that throw light on the fact that John was always the disciple whom Jesus loved? What a fellowship, what a joy divine, may be established with Christ from the first day that one becomes a Christian!

*Unit 3:14*  
2. In school with Jesus. What finer days for forming friendships than school days? The immediate purpose of Christ in calling the twelve disciples was that they might be in a training school with him. Mark tells us "that he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach---" Is not the immediate purpose, and most important purpose of the education of every Christian that he might be in comradeship with Jesus? You girls, right now, have such a privilege and golden opportunity here at Montreat College for that matchless comradeship, with the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

2

2

You may be with Christ in the school of prayer, in the school of scripture understanding, in the school of personal witnessing, in the school of suffering. If you leave this college without having a closer walk with Jesus, your course here will have been a colossal failure.

3. Then you may have what we may term an exceptional experience in comradeship with Jesus. This is suggested by the international S.S. lesson today when Peter, James and John were selected to be with Jesus in that mountain top experience. Some of you may be selected for exceptional experiences with Jesus. It may be to go to some retreat for a few days, or to a summer conference. Or it may be in the quietness and beauty of these mountains in the Land of Sky, when ~~alone with Jesus~~ like the disciples on the Mt. of transfiguration you will see no one, save Jesus only. Such a mountain top experience may be the turning point, or the pivotal point of your life, and like Peter, you will have the desire just to remain at the scene of that most exceptional spiritual experience.

4. This leads us to a fourth experience of comradeship in Christ and with Christ. It is the peculiar privilege of a foreign missionary. After having seen the vision of glory, and had a vision of Golgotha, and a global vision, and have responded with the answer, "Here am I send me, the missionary finds himself in the uttermost parts of the earth, and lo, he finds ~~there~~ Christ there, simply keeping his promise, "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. David Livingstone found him in darkest Africa and John G. Paton found Him on the New Hebrides, even when he had to bury his wife and little son in the same grave there on that lonely island. Referring to that experience later he said, "Had it not been for Jesus Christ and his fellowship, I would have gone mad beside that lonely grave." Every true missionary of the cross can join in the admonition of the old proverb which says, ~~With Christ~~ Without Christ do not go over the threshold. With Christ go over the sea."

5. In the time of sorrow and of death. Jesus took with him into the home of the ruler whose daughter had died, and into the garden of Gethsemane, the scene of his own agony, Peter and James and John. Some 1000 years before Jesus came into the world David under the Spirit of God saw the Lord as his Shepherd, and said "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. In times of deepest gloom and sorrow, and even when passing from this life may be especially experienced the presence and fellowship of Jesus Christ.

6. Again we may be sure that to anyone who loves Jesus and keeps his word may come the glorious experience of comradeship with Him. One of the great promises of Jesus is found in John 14:23 where he says, "If a man love me he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And that is just like heaven on earth, for the very word is used here as in John 14:2. In my Father's house are many mansions. Jesus will bring heaven to earth for one who loves him and keeps his word.

7. Once more, this glorious comradeship with Christ may be experienced by any one who hears His voice and opens the door of his heart unto Jesus. Lest some poor sinner may feel that he is entirely shut out from fellowship with Christ, that his love is too weak, that his sin is too great, the Risen; glorified Christ from his throne in heaven has said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." ~~So~~ you get the force of those last four words—and he with me? Not only will Jesus come in to be the guest to anyone who hears his voice and opens the door, but Jesus will assume the role of Host, and give to him all the bounties which heaven can afford—and he with me.

8. This brings us next to say that for the man in Christ this comradeship continues even after death. The dying thief upon the cross rejoiced to see ~~him~~ in Jesus his Savior and King, and heard him speak those wonderful words to him as he said, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory. Their bodies being still united to Christ do rest in their graves until the resurrection."

9. For the Christian comradeship with Christ continues on from glory to glory throughout all eternity. In the prayer of Jesus in John 17 he says, "Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." "O that will be glory for me, glory for me, glory for me, When by his grace I shall look on His face, that will be glory, be glory for me."

10. Finally, the Christian will have fellowship with Christ in sharing with him his throne in heaven. Hear the Risen, reigning Christ as he says, "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my father in his throne." "And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign forever and ever." "And so we shall ever be with the Lord."

Jesus invites us into such a comradeship. Are we willing to accept His pro-offered friendship with all its implications? He has said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

Shall our response be; Where He leads me I will follow

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I'll go with Him, with Him ALL THE WAY.