

## OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS CHRIST!

### *Christ Is Our Relationship*

When Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one is coming to the Father, except through Me,” He was stating a fact about man’s relationship with God. That is, on the negative side, no one can have a relationship with God apart from Christ, and on the positive side, our relationship with God in coming to Him is exclusively through Christ. In other words, Christ is our relationship with God.

Our relationship with God is different than every other kind of relationship. The difference is that our relationship with God is Christ’s *own* relationship with God. Thus, when we receive Christ, we receive *His* relationship with the Father. To have a relationship with God we need *the way*, we need *the truth*, and we need *the life*. For these needs “He is the way, He is the truth, and He is the life!” Thus, coming to the Father *through* Him means coming with Him as the way, the truth, and the life, that is, He Himself is our relationship with God.

Our standing, position and condition before the Father is Christ’s standing, position, and condition. It is summed up with Paul’s word in Galatians 2:20, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...” Before God it is no longer *my* standing, *my* position, and *my* condition. No! My relationship with God is made up of *His* standing, *His* position, and *His* condition. He is not only my Substitute in His death on the cross, He is my Substitute for my whole relationship with God (cf. Rom. 5:10).

### *Christ Is Our Righteousness*

Christ is our relationship with God in the same way He is our righteousness (1Cor. 1:30). As righteousness is

a gift (Rom. 5:17), so our relationship with God is a gift (Rom. 6:23; John 17:2-3). The meaning of the gift of eternal life is the gift of the Father and Son’s relationship — it is the life of the Triune God. It is *Their* relationship that is the content of the life called “eternal life.”

Just as righteousness is not what we establish, so our relationship with God is not established by us (Rom. 10:3-4). It is possible to be ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seek to establish our own righteousness. It may appear like we are a religious person, but in reality we are establishing our own righteousness. For example, it may take the form of making little deals with God, “Lord, I know I’ve been bad. Now, I want to turn over a new leaf and to try to offset my bad deeds with good deeds.” This is the way we make little deals in our mind, seeking to establish our own righteousness.

But righteousness is not something we establish, it is something we submit to and receive as a gift. Romans 10:3 says Israel was, “Seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” The two contrasting words are *establishing* and *submitting*. Submitting to the righteousness of God is defined in verse 4, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” Don’t establish anything — submit to Christ as your righteousness. It’s not our own efforts of trying to establish something, but it’s submitting. Drop your feeble efforts. Confess you are nothing. You have nothing. We are wretched men. But thank God, His grace and His mercy is to give us Himself, His very person and all the righteousness that flows out of Him to the whole universe. That righteousness becomes mine freely (2 Cor. 5:21). We are robed and clothed with Christ Himself as our righteousness.

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### *How do we come to the Father?*

Now, how do we come to the Father? Do we come with our tail between our legs? Just consider the prodigal son. He came home with his tail between his legs, thinking he could only merit the Father's favor if he came back in a very humble kind of way. But the Father ran out to meet him. The Father said, "Put the best robe on him and bring out the fatted calf." Just reflect on how the Father unconditionally receives the son. This is how we are received in Him, because we come clothed in Christ. He Himself is our standing and relationship with God. So, now we come to the Father without blame. We come to the Father in perfection. We don't come to Him partially acceptable, and partially unacceptable. We don't come condemned. We come to the Father exclusively in Him. Like the line in Charles Wesley's hymn, "Alive in Him my living head, and clothed in righteousness divine."

### *How is your relationship with the Lord?*

So if I ask you, How is your relationship with the Lord? You might look at yourself and consider your present condition. This morning you had a few little exchanges with your spouse. You said some things out of your irritation with the children. Just consider your condition for a moment. The more you look at your condition, the deeper you will sink in the mire. But when we see that our relationship with the Father is Christ, it's not in the realm of how I am doing. It's in the realm of how He is doing? We don't dare exist for one second in the presence of God apart from a full and perfect righteousness. We do not come on our own in any measure. It is only and always Christ. Let me say it in this way, your relationship with God is Christ or you don't have one. No one comes to the Father. No one comes....except through Him.

Our relationship with God is described in a most wonderful way in Colossians 2:9-10. Verse 9 says, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Just look at Him. All the fullness is concentrated in Him. Then look at yourself according to verse 10 in the Wuest translation: "And you are in Him, having been completely filled full with the present result that you are in a state of fullness in Him." You are not partially in Him — half in and half out. You are in a state of fullness in Him. We are joined to that fullness concentrated in Him! Thus, the status of your relationship with God is to be found in the fullness resident in Christ.

On top of this, Colossians 3:4, says, "For you died, and your life is in a continuous state of being hidden with Christ in God." Our relationship with God is wrapt up and within Christ's relationship. The relationship between the Father and the Son is now hidden and resident in our spirit. It only needs

a few "Abba Fathers" to break into the love relationship between the Father and the Son (see: John 17:26)

Moreover, Galatians 4:6 says, "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father." Wonder of wonders! Their relationship has been sent into our hearts. These verses firmly establish the truth that our relationship with God is Christ! It has nothing to do with what I establish. Any relationship with God based on our works or righteousness is a false relationship. It is only good for crucifixion and termination.

Thus, I no longer need to live trying to work up a relationship with God. The New Testament clearly reveals that when Christ died on the cross for all, He not only forgave us of our sins, but He ended our relationship with God based on our self. We died in His death, and came up in union with Him in His resurrection — now to *own* His relationship with God the Father (see: John 20:17). Second Corinthians 5:14-15 says, <sup>14</sup> "Because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; <sup>15</sup> And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised." For us to die in His death and no longer live to ourselves means that our own kind of relationship with God has been forever terminated. Now there is only one unique and exclusive relationship with God that exists. That relationship is the Father and the Son's relationship with Each Other (Matt. 11:27). It is Their relationship we receive when we receive Christ.

### *Our relationship with God started in eternity past*

Our present relationship with God has a history, and the history goes back to eternity past. Our relationship with God is not something that just started two years ago, ten years ago, fifteen years ago, whatever. No. Our relationship with God started in eternity past. We are enjoying something that has a long history revealed in the Word of God. This eternal dimension is how we need to understand our relationship with God. Rather than living on egg shells and wondering whether or not we're going to make it or not. We need to be grounded in this relationship we have with God that stretches back to eternity past.

This eternal dimension is opened up in Ephesians 1:3-5. Verse 3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." This verse reveals whose Lord Jesus Christ He is — He's *our* Lord Jesus Christ. He's *your* Lord Jesus Christ. We own His relationship with God, the Father. Notice that it doesn't say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our condition. It's doesn't say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our good week." It says, "Blessed be the God and Father of

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our Lord Jesus Christ.” Immediately you are escorted out of yourself into Him. He is the sphere where all the spiritual blessings reside.

Then in verses 4 and 5 we see how our relationship with God in Christ started in eternity past: <sup>4</sup> “Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, <sup>5</sup> Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ.” The words, “Chose us in Him,” “before,” and “predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ,” tells us that God marked us out in eternity past to participate in the very relationship that the Son has with the Father. This relationship is called “sonship.” This is not something we do on our own or come up with on our own. Sonship is direct participation in the life of the Son of God.

This direct participation happens because we have merged with Him and become one spirit. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” So that, we are joined to Another — *other* than ourselves. To Another who has been raised from the dead, even the Lord Himself. So my relationship with God started in eternity past when He thought about me., considered me, handled me. When He set the course of my life, when I would be on this earth in this generation. I have been contemplated by the Triune God, thought about, counseled over, and predestinated in the very relationship that the Son has with the Father. That’s my relationship, it started there. Thus, for all the redeemed children of God, our relationship with God in Christ started in eternity past.

So, forget about *your* relationship with God based on yourself, trash it real quick. We are crucified with Christ — we are terminated — it is no longer I — we died and our life is now hidden with Christ in God. Now, we can drop our seeking to establish a relationship with God, and submit to Christ as our relationship. Just turn away, and contemplate that your relationship with God started in eternity past. It is what God predestinated. That relationship is our destiny. It is for us to now simply believe, enjoy, fellowship, partake, draw, come, and rest in “Our Lord Jesus Christ” — *Our* relationship with God.

***Our relationship with God  
was defined in eternity past***

According to Ephesians 2:10, we see how our relationship with God was further defined in eternity past. Paul says it, “For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand in order that we should walk in them.” First, we need to see how we were created. We were created not in ourselves, but in Christ Jesus. God dealt with us according to Christ. He didn’t deal with me according to *my* potential. He dealt with me according to His potential. When God set *the Christian Vol. 20, No. 4*

out to do something over us, He did it in His Son. Then He gave His Son to us as a gift. This is how God dealt with us.

The last part of Ephesians 2:10 tells us that God prepared beforehand good works that we should walk in them. This is the result of having been created in Christ Jesus. Thus, God’s masterpiece is made up of first, creating us in Christ Jesus, then preparing good works for us to walk in. Verse 10 follows the sequence of thought found in Ephesians 2:8-9, and should be understood with it: <sup>8</sup> “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> Not of works that no one should boast.” The first connecting word of verse 10 is “For” which tells us that everything connected to our relationship with God is totally out of God, and not of ourselves — we are His masterpiece! The masterpiece is related to how God created us — not in our condition, history, or potential, but *in Christ Jesus!*

What this truth does to me is that it rips me away from looking at myself, contemplating myself, considering my potential, as if I am the savior. It rips me away from the futility and waste of time of being occupied with my efforts to establish a relationship with God. It delivers me from being self-absorbed in myself. I have been created in Christ Jesus. In eternity past God only thought of me, God only considered me, God only handled me in His Son. So, for me to go to any other spot or place, but to Him is not the truth. Everything else is falsehood other than Him. This is a foundational truth for our entire Christian life. In light of the spiritual warfare over our life, we better understand what it is to have a proper relationship with God (1 John 5:20). I better know what the factors are that relates me to the Father, and how I should think about myself. Not according to the devil’s accusation or some false idea, but according the revelation given to us in His Word.

***Our relationship with God  
was established in Christ Jesus***

In 2 Timothy 1:9, it says, “Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” What was given to us was “according to His *own* purpose and grace.” The Greek word for “own” is where we derive the word “idiomatic.” Something idiomatic means something peculiar and unique that belongs to a language.” It is this kind of word that describes God’s *own* purpose of a holy calling given to us “in Christ Jesus.” Thus, being *in Christ* and having everything given to us *in Christ* is something that originates from God’s *own* unique purpose. By this we can see that our relationship with God

was not established by us but was established out of God's own purpose and grace. It was God's own thought to put us in Christ and make Him to be our relationship with God.

These kind of verses take us back into the counsels of God in eternity past to see what God ordained for our relationship with Him. We don't make it up, we don't try to work it out. We see it! We first see our relationship! Our relationship comes to us as a revelation. That's what happen to Paul at the end of Romans 7. After he came to the end of his own energy, and will power, he was in a place where he needed a relationship with God outside of himself. Thus, he cries out, "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24).

Paul himself could not overcome the tenth commandment, Thou shalt not lust, or desire. His own relationship with the law taught him that sin was deeper than his actions. Sin was in his reactions. He tried to overcome it, but to no avail. The battle he went through in Romans 7 ends up with, "O wretched man that I am." When he was totally defeated, the light broke in upon him about his relationship with God. Revelation came. Then he breaks out with a very short utterance. There is no big explanation. No theological dissertation. No record of an experience that he had. He just breaks out, and this breaking out was based upon a revelation of his relationship with God through Jesus Christ. What he saw is compressed in eight words — "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Paul was reduced to utter simplicity. He had been seeking to establish a relationship with God based upon his good flesh. Now he is on the floor, a failure, and a wretch. Now what do I do? Our deliverance comes from seeing that my relationship with God is Christ! Listen! Here it is, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Period — just period. Then with this revelation Paul declares, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). "Now no condemnation?" Do you really mean "Now" Paul? You just got through saying, "Wretched." "Now no condemnation?" He does not attribute his deliverance to some "victorious" experience. Neither does he present his deliverance as a process of growth. His deliverance came through a revelation of His relationship with God through Christ. His eyes were shifted from himself to thanking God through Jesus Christ. Sight comes before experience. Don't dare tinker with yourself outside of Christ. Don't dare take another slot apart from Him.

### *The cycle of being adjusted to our relationship*

Our fierce struggles are part of a cycle of escorting us to our resting place — Christ as our relationship with God. These struggles are made up of experiences where

the Lord speaks to you either in the written Word, or a *rhema* word in your spirit. The speaking is like a requirement or a demand on you. Immediately you feel in yourself a resistance to this speaking. Don't panic. You have just entered into the next phase of a cycle that is leading you to your relationship with God. It's only a phase where you coexist for a period with a speaking from God that leaves you helpless. This stage of the cycle will include involuntary resistance, unwillingness, failure and even rebellion. This is all part of the cycle of being experientially adjusted out of yourself to your relationship with God in Christ.

Following the speaking and the resistance to it comes the next phase in the cycle — a discovery that there is nothing in you for God. You're for yourself. There's a discovery within you that you really don't want God. You want yourself and your flesh — so you're faced with your wretchedness. Yes, there is something in you that wants God, but there is also something in you that resists God. This produces within you inward turmoil, but this turmoil is all part of a cycle. The cycle at this stage leads you into a personal discovery of your own wretchedness. You may even feel you have totally messed up *your* relationship with God. That's just fine. You are now ready for the final phase of the cycle.

The final phase of the cycle comes in the form of a revelation that *Christ is our relationship with God*. This revelation is based on a personal discovery of our own wretchedness. We are then experientially adjusted from looking at ourselves to looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. What started in eternity past in the counsels of the Godhead to make Christ our relationship with God is now becoming our experience in the details of our daily life. Just let the cycle adjust you into a full participation of Christ as your all.

— Bill Freeman

## *the Christian*

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