

Union With Jesus

by Samuel Logan Brengle

The sermon emphasizes the importance of a spiritual union with Jesus, where one's will, faith, suffering, and purpose are aligned with God's will.

Scripture: Job 1:21, Psalm 27:1-3, Psalm 40:8, John 10:30, John 15:5, John 17:21, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 4:15, Hebrews 2:11

Topics: "Surrender to God's Will", "Union with Christ"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the profound spiritual union between believers and Jesus, likening it to the intimate connections found in nature, such as the vine and branches or the body and its head. This union encompasses a shared will, faith, suffering, and purpose, urging believers to surrender their will to God and trust Him unconditionally, even in adversity. Brengle illustrates that true union with Christ leads to a life of self-sacrifice and a deep commitment to God's mission, encouraging believers to fully identify with Jesus and His purpose. He concludes by inviting listeners to enter into this union through faith, obedience, and a willingness to make sacrifices for Christ. The sermon calls for a heartfelt commitment to live in accordance with God's will, reflecting the love and unity that Jesus desires for His followers.

Transcript

Jesus said, 'I and My Father are one' (John x. 30), and it is His loving purpose that you and I shall be able to say that too, and say it now in this present time, in the face of the devil and in holy, triumphant defiance of a frowning world and of shrinking, trembling flesh.

There is a union with Jesus as intimate as that of the branch and the vine, or as that of the various members of the body with the head, or as that between Jesus and the Father. This is shown by such Scriptures as that in which Jesus said, 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches' (John xv. 5), and in His great intercessory prayer, where He prays, 'that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us' (John xvii. 21).

It is also shown in such passages as that in which Paul, speaking of Jesus, says that God 'hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body' (Eph. i. 22, 23), and again that we 'may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ' (Eph. iv. 15), and again, 'For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one' (Heb. ii. 11). It is also shown clearly in Paul's testimony, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20).

This union is, of course, not physical, but spiritual, and can be known to the one who has entered into it by the direct witness of the Spirit; but it can be known to others only by its effects and fruits in the life.

This spiritual union is mysterious and yet simple, and many of our everyday relationships partially illustrate it. Where two people have interests or purposes the same, they are to that extent one. A Republican or Democrat is one with every other man of his party throughout the whole country in so far as they hold similar principles. This is an imperfect sort of union. And yet it is union. Our General may be in any part of the world, pushing forward his mighty schemes of conquest for Jesus, and every other Salvationist, however humble he may be, just in so far as he has the same spirit and ideals as the General, is one with him. A husband and wife, or a boy and his mother, may be separated by continents and seas, and yet be one. For six months three thousand miles of wild waves rolled between me and a little woman I rejoiced to call 'wife,' but my heart was as absolutely true to her and my confidence in her fidelity was as supreme as now when we sit side by side -- and we were one.

But more perfect, more tender, more holy and infinitely more self-consuming and ennobling and enduring is the union of the soul with Jesus than is any other possible relationship. It is like the union of the bay with the sea. It is a union of nature, a commingling of spirit, an eternal marriage of heart, and soul, and mind.

I. It is a union of will. Jesus said, 'I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me' (John vi. 38), and again, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me' (John iv. 34). And so it is with those who are one with Jesus. The Psalmist said, 'I delight to do Thy will, O my God' (Ps. xl. 8), and that is the testimony of every one who has entered into this divine union. There may, and doubtless will, be times when this will is hard for flesh and blood, but even then the soul says with its Lord, 'Not my will, but Thine, be done' (Luke xxii. 42), and prays always, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven' (Matt. vi. 10).

In the very nature of things there can be no union with Jesus without this union of will, for there is really very little of a man but his will. That is really all he can call his own. His mind, with all its splendid powers and possibilities, may be reduced to idiocy; he may be robbed of his property. His health, and even his life may be taken away from him, but who can enter into the domain of his will and rob him of that?

I say it reverently, so far as we know, not even God Himself can compel a man's will. God wants to enter into a partnership, an infinitely tender and exalting fellowship, a spiritual marriage with the will of man. He approaches man with tremendous inducements and motives of infinite profit and loss, and yet the man may resist and utterly thwart the loving thought and purpose of God. He can refuse to surrender his will. But surrender he must, if there is to be a union between him and God, for God's will, based as it is on eternal righteousness, founded in infinite knowledge and wisdom and love, is unchangeable, and man's highest good is in a hearty and affectionate surrender to it and a union with it.

II. It is a union of faith -- of mutual confidence and esteem. God trusts him, and he trust God. God can entrust him with the honour of His name and His holy character in the midst of a world of rebels. God can empower him and beautify him with His Spirit and adorn him with all heavenly graces, without any fear that the man will take the glory of these things to himself. God can heap upon him riches and treasures and honors without any fear that the man will use them for selfish ends or prostitute them to unholy purposes.

Again, the man trusts God. He trusts God when he cannot trace Him. He has confidence in the faithfulness and love of God in adversity as well as in prosperity. He does not have to be fed on sweetmeats and live in sunshine and sleep on roses in order to believe that God is for him. God can

mingle bitter with all His sweets, and allow the thorns to prick him, and the storm-clouds to roll all about him, and yet he will stubbornly trust on. Like Job, his property may be swept away in a day, and his children die about him, and yet with Job he will say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job. i. 21), and still trust on.

His own life may be menaced and be filled with weariness and pain, and his faithless wife bid him curse God and die, and yet he will say, 'What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' (Job. ii. 10), and still trust on.

His friends may gather about him and attack his Christian integrity and character, and foolishly assault the foundations of his faith by assuring him that if he were right with God these calamities could never befall him. Yet he will look up from his ash-heap and out of his utter wreck and ruin and desolation, cry, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' (Job. xiii. 15). And though communities or nations conspire against him, he will say with David, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? . . . Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident' (Ps. xxvii. 1, 3).

A woman said to me the other day, 'I dread to think of the end of the world. It makes me afraid.' But though worlds, like drunken men, tumble from their orbits, and though the universe crash into ruin, the child-like confidence of the man who trusts God will enable him to sing with the Psalmist, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof' (Ps. xlvii. 1-3).

God can be familiar with such a man. He can take all sorts of liberties with his property, his reputation, his position, his friends, his health, his life, and allow devils and men to taunt him; but the man unchangeably fixed in his estimate of God's holy character and everlasting love, will still triumphantly trust on.

III. It is a union of suffering, of sympathy. Once when I was passing through what seemed to me a perfect hell of spiritual temptation and sufferings, the Lord supported me with this text, 'In all their affliction He was afflicted' (Isa. lxiii. 9). The prophet refers in these words to the afflictions of the children of Israel in Egypt and in the wilderness after their escape from the hard bondage of Pharaoh, and he says in all their sufferings Jesus suffered with them.

Let her child be racked with pain and scorched with fever and choked with croup, but the mother suffers more than the child; and so let the people of God be sore tempted and tried, and Jesus agonizes with them. He is the world's great Sufferer. His passion is for ever. He once tasted death for every man. He suffers still with every man. There is not a cry of anguish, nor a heartache, nor a pang of spiritual pain in all the world that does not reach His ear and touch His heart, and stir all His mighty sympathies. But especially does He suffer and sympathize with His own believing children. And in turn the man who is one with Jesus suffers and sympathizes with Jesus.

Any injury to the cause of Christ causes him more pain than any personal loss. He mourns over the desolations of Zion more than over the loss of his property. The lukewarmness of Christians cuts him to the heart. The cry of the heathen for the gospel of salvation is to him the cry of the travail, the agony of Jesus Himself. He gladly says, with David, 'The reproaches of them that reproached Thee have fallen upon me' (Ps. lxxix. 9). He esteems the reproach of Christ greater treasure than all the pleasure and power and profits of this world combined. As the true wife gladly suffers privation and shame and reproach with

her husband whom she knows to be righteous and honorable, so he who is one with Jesus rejoices that he is 'counted worthy to suffer shame for His name' (Acts v.41). He suffers and sympathizes with Jesus.

IV. It is a union of purpose. The great mass of men serve God for reward; they do not want to go to Hell; they want to go to Heaven. And that is right. But it is not the highest motive. There is a union with Jesus in which the soul is not so anxious to escape Hell as it is to be free from sin, and in which Heaven is not so desirable as holiness. The soul in this state thinks very little about its reward. His smile of approval is its Heaven. The housekeeper wants wages, but the wife never thinks of such a thing. She serves for very love. She is one in purpose with her husband. His triumphs are hers. His losses are hers. All he has is hers and she is his. And, as the Apostle says, 'For all things are yours, . . . and ye are Christ's' (I Cor. iii. 21, 23). The will of God is the supreme good of this man. Some one has said that if two angels were sent into this world, one of whom was to rule it and the other was to sweep street crossings, that the sweeper would be so satisfied with his Heavenly Father's will that he would not exchange places with the ruler.

The purpose of Jesus is to save the world and uphold the honor of God, and establish truth in the lives, the hearts, the laws, the customs of men, and this is the purpose of this man.

In order to do this, Jesus sacrificed every earthly prospect, and laid down His life, and this man does the same. He does not stand in the presence of the world's great crying need and hesitate and wonder if the Lord really wants him to give a few cents or dollars for the salvation of the heathen. He does not quibble as to whether God really requires him to make the sacrifice and leave his dog-kennel and chicken coop and barn and house furnished a little below the standard of beauty and luxury set by his ungodly neighbors. He does not struggle and kick against the pricks when he feels God would have him forsake business and preach the gospel. He would loathe himself to have such mean thoughts.

He does not say, 'If I were rich,' but out of the abundance of his poverty he pours into the lap of the world's need, and like the widow he gladly gives all his living to save the world. When God looks about for a man to stand up for His honour and warn a wicked world and offers terms of peace to sinners, this man does not say, 'If I were only educated or gifted I would go,' but with a heart flaming with love for Jesus and the world He has bought with His Blood, cries out, 'Here am I, send me.' It can be said of him as it was of his Lord 'The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up' (John ii. 17).

A young carpenter in New England, whose name was unknown, came every few months to the Divisional Headquarters, and gave a hundred or more dollars for the work of God in India, or some other portion of the world. He was one with Jesus in His purpose to save the world.

On a bitter wintry day a poor woman came to John Wesley's apartment in Oxford University. She was shivering with cold. Wesley asked her why she did not dress more warmly She replied that she had no warmer garments. When she was gone, Wesley looked at the pictures on his walls, and said to himself in substance, 'If my Lord should come, would He be pleased to see these on my walls when His poor are suffering with cold?' Then he sold the pictures and gave to the poor. And in this way began that mighty and life-long beneficence and almost matchless self-sacrifice that has led to the blessing of millions upon millions of men.

O my God, that Thy people might see what union with Thee really means.

Do you ask, 'How can I enter into this union?'

1. Read God's promises until you see that it is possible. Especially read and ponder over the fifteenth and seventeenth chapters of the Gospel according to John.
2. Read and ponder over the commandments until you see that it is necessary. Without this union here there will be no union in eternity.
3. Make the sacrifice that is necessary in order to become one with Jesus.

The woman who will be the true wife of a man must be prepared to give up all other lovers, leave her home, and forsake father, mother, brothers and sisters, change her name, and utterly identify herself her prospects for life, her all, with the man she loves. And so must you be prepared to identify yourself utterly with Christ, to be hated, despised, rejected, crucified of men; but armed, baptized with the Holy Ghost, and crowned of God.

Does your heart consent to this, my brother? If so, make a perpetual covenant with your Lord just now. Do it intelligently. Do it with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, and God will seal you for His own. Do not waver. Do not doubt. Do not cast away your confidence because of your feelings or lack of feelings, but stand by your facts. Walk by faith, and God will soon prove His ownership in you in a way that will be altogether satisfactory to both your head and your heart, and convincing to men and devils.

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