

Drawing Strength from Christ

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[0:00] Well, let's open this morning to John 15, a very familiar passage. We're studying what it means to be in Christ in this Sunday school class! Using Edward Donnelly's book, *Life in Christ*, as our study guide.

Remember, all humanity hangs on one of the two representatives, Christ or Adam. To be in Adam is to still be in your sins. It's still to be under the wrath of God.

It's to be powerless under the reign of sin. But to be in Christ is to be forgiven. It's to have a righteousness in heaven that is impeccable, that's spotless.

It's to be free from the reign of sin, as we saw last time. That sin no longer reigns over you if you're in Christ. And now this morning, we want to see chapter 3 in his book opens up the power and resources that are ours for living the Christian life, if we are in Christ.

Now, power is something that we all need. We see it illustrated all around us. The lights are on because there's a power source somewhere supplying those light bulbs.

[1:24] It's warm in here. There's a heater and something is supplying power to that heater. And cars run on gas.

And Christians run on Christ. That's the lesson of this, or the object of this lesson this morning. We draw power. We draw resources from Christ himself because if we are in Christ, we are attached to him who is our strength.

John 15, 4 and 5. Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain in the vine.

Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit.

Apart from me, you can do nothing. Now, these words of our Savior, then, are full of the language of union with Christ.

[2:35] He speaks of remaining in me. That's the trigger word that ought to trigger in your mind this theme that Paul is often found using.

Here it's the Lord Jesus himself speaking of one's union with Christ, one being joined or connected to Jesus. Now, I suppose grapevines were as common in Palestine as grass is in Bremen.

Nearly every home would have had a grapevine. And so when Jesus says, I am the vine, you are the branches, he was drawing on a very well-known object lesson and setting himself forth as the vine, you are the branches.

Now, how is Jesus like a vine and Christians like branches? Tell me some of the things that come to your mind from just this short reading.

What is true of Jesus as a vine and of believers as branches? Yes, Lou? Pardon?

[3:42] To get the food. All right. The branches get their food from the vine. What's the spiritual lesson from that, Lou? That's our life.

All right. Good. That's the nub of it, isn't it? Any other comments? Tim? We have a promise that we can do all things through Christ and give us strength.

Okay. It's through Christ. It's in union with Christ that strength comes to the believer. Just like the branch. Lifeless without Christ.

It draws all of its nourishment and strength from its connection to the vine. So the Christian draws all of his spiritual life and vitality and grace and virtue and everything good from our connection, a vital living connection to Christ.

So union with Christ, then, is more than a legal idea. It's more than the fact that in heaven, God views us on the record books as being in Christ.

[4:55] And so, therefore, all of his righteousness is put to our account and all of our sin is put to his account. That's an objective reality. That's an objective reality.

To be in Christ is to have that legal status before God of not guilty, no longer condemned. There's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

But union with Christ, then, is not just that. It is that. But it's also a dynamic, personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Union with Christ is union with a person. It's being connected to the Lord Jesus such that there is a continual outflow of spiritual energy from him to us.

So union with Christ speaks of a relationship. As well as an objective reality that's true in heaven. It's the Lord Jesus who enables us, then, to say no to sin and yes to righteousness.

[5:59] It's his work within us so that we are willing to do and have power to do what pleases him. Remember Ephesians 2.10 says, We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus.

That's, again, speaking of our union with him. We've been created in Christ Jesus. We've been attached to Christ Jesus so that we might do good works. Those good works are the outflow of our being engrafted into Christ Jesus.

So the Christian life is just plain, flat out impossible without union to Christ. Because Christ will require of you things that only his power can enable you to do.

You will be required in the Christian life to love your enemies. Now, that's something. You will need vital union with Christ to draw the strength to love your enemies.

You will be required to say no to sin. And that will take more than what you have to give. You'll be required to have patience with all sorts of people and situations and trials that try your patience to the nth degree.

[7:15] All this, you see, in the Christian life requires a power, resources greater than yourself. Hence, union with Christ.

Abide in me is the answer. Remember, remain close to me. Join to me. Be aware of my presence. Draw on my strength for all that you need.

So it's not self-improvement. It's not self-help religion. It's not, oh, I need a new technique to learn how to do this or that. Not that some of those things cannot be helpful.

But apart from Christ, you can do nothing with the best of books. It is vital union with Christ that we need. So it's a call then, when he calls us to abide in Christ, it's a call to a conscious realization of this relationship that we have with Christ.

Our union with Christ is a constant reality, whether we're thinking about it or not. If you're a believer this morning, you are united to Christ. You are dead to sin's reign, whether you feel like it or not.

[8:25] That's an objective reality. You are righteous in the sight of God. If you're in Christ this morning, whether you feel righteous or not. But when we come to John 15, we see that we're commanded to abide in Christ.

That's something you are to do. That's not something that happens whether you think about it or not. It's not like what Jesus is here talking about just is an automatic.

No, it's a command. This is an imperative. This is a duty. You abide in Christ. So this is something we are to do ourselves. This is something we are to give our attention to.

Donnelly says we are to actively cultivate our union with Christ. Realizing it. Realizing it.

Experiencing it. Luxuriating in it.

So that it becomes the center around which our life revolves. This relationship with Jesus Christ. Him the vine. Me the branch.

[9:25] That's the center. And all that I do in life revolves around my union with Him. So how do we do this? Donnelly offers three directives.

How do we abide in Christ? First, we abide by faith. By faith. All right. Hebrews 12 and verse 2. Fixing our eyes on Jesus.

That's the language of faith, isn't it? Jesus is not visibly present to our eyes, but He's speaking of the eyes of faith.

The eye of faith that can see things that are not seen. As strange as that sentence sounds. But that's what the Bible says of Moses. That He saw Him who is invisible.

With the eye of faith, He looked and saw His Lord. And so we abide in Christ by faith. We see Him. We see Him always there at our right hand.

[10:29] He's continually before us. With us. And faith keeps before us then. Who He is. What He's done for us. What He is doing for us.

What He promised to do for us. Constantly realizing our branch in the vine relationship. With the Lord Jesus.

So, as we live with an eye to Christ and us being united to Him. We then are called to live in the light of that reality. We're in Christ. And so, by faith, we live in the light of it.

And we do so with great expectation. And great confidence. Just as a sheep can say, The Lord is my shepherd. Therefore, I shall not be in want. So, a branch can say, The Lord is my vine.

I shall not be in want. I feel my weakness before this command. I feel my weakness before this schedule of mine.

[11:39] I feel my weakness before this temptation. Before this trial. But Lord, I am attached to you. And so, the branch has great expectation of help.

Because he's attached to the vine. And so, he can be strong in the Lord and in His mighty strength. It's no accident that Christians are referred to as believers in the Bible.

We are called believers. Why is that? Well, in short, because from beginning to end, it's by believing, isn't it? It's by faith.

From first to last. The first step of the Christian life, entry into the Christian life, is faith. And the last step out of this life into the next world is faith.

And every step in between is faith. So, we're believers. We're the faith ones. The ones exercising faith. The ones going on believing.

[12:40] At every step, we look by faith to Christ. And we draw all that we need from Him. Psalm 105:4 Look to the Lord and His strength.

Seek His face always. So, that's the first way that we abide in Christ. We, by faith, see Him and our relationship to Him.

We recognize that we're in Him as a branch in the vine. Secondly, we abide by obedience. Look at verse 10 in John 15.

Verse 10. Jesus has been speaking of this vital union of being in Him and Him in us. And He goes on to say in verse 10, If you obey my commands, you will remain or abide in my love.

Just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and abide or remain in His love. You see, obedience is absolutely essential to abiding.

[13:44] The Lord Jesus Himself abided in His Father's love. And He did so by abiding in obedience to His Father. The Lord Jesus is our Master.

And to abide in Him is to obey Him. To disobey is to break fellowship with Him. It's to allow sin to come between us.

Even as clouds can come and block the warm rays of the sun. So that though the sun is shining and there it is, yet we are not feeling the warm rays of it.

Because something has come between. The cloud of sin that comes between. The cloud of disobedience in the Christian's life. So, we're to think of this union with Christ as a very personal, intimate relationship.

That means you should start to think of it in terms of the most intimate relationship on earth. That's the parallel that Paul draws in Ephesians chapter 5.

[14:47] The relationship between Christ and His church is pictured in a small way by the relationship between a husband and a wife. So, this most personal, intimate relationship with your spouse.

What is a controversy between the two of you due to your closeness? What does it do to your union? We're talking about being united to Christ.

Well, you have been united to your spouse. What does a controversy do to that union? Well, it in some way destroys it for the moment, doesn't it?

Now, on the record books at the courthouse, you are still united in marriage, aren't you? Yes, in the sight of the law, you're still married. But as to the intimacy of that union, something has come between.

And so, the unity and intimacy, the communion, has been destroyed for the moment. That closeness, that oneness has been interrupted by something that's come between you.

[15:58] And intimacy will not be restored until that is brought out into the light, confessed, made right, corrected. Well, so it is with the Lord Jesus and every believer who's united to Him.

You know this. You know what it is to have something between your soul and the Savior. The controversy, the disobedience, the pride that will not let go of something, the self-will. And as long as that thing is there, the intimacy of your union with Christ is lost. Now, you're still united to Christ. That's the reality.

But you've lost the sweetness, the warmth, the closeness of it all. The relational oneness. And that's what Isaiah, the Lord is saying through Isaiah 59, 1 and 2.

The people were praying to the Lord and He wasn't answering. And they're wondering, what's wrong? Is our God not powerful? Is He deaf?

[17:04] Is He not hearing our prayers? And so the word of the Lord comes through Isaiah the prophet, chapter 59 and verse 2. Surely, you can be sure of this, people of God. The arm of the Lord is not too short that He cannot save.

The problem isn't with God's power. Here you are in your need and you're praying and God's not coming to your aid. And all you're doing is living with your weakness and inadequacy. The problem isn't that He's not strong enough.

That His arm's too short to help you. That He can't reach from heaven and quite get down and bring His power to where you are. No. It's not that at all. And He goes on and says, Nor His ear too dull to hear.

It's not that He hasn't heard you. He hears the very words that you speak while they're still on your tongue before you speak them. No, the answer lies elsewhere.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God. He's talking to the covenant people of God. And that intimacy that they enjoyed had been fractured.

[18:14] And what had fractured it was their iniquities, their sins. Your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear. Your sins have been like a cloud that's come between you and the face, the warm face of your Savior.

So we're talking about a close relationship that's been interrupted by an issue coming between. Well, you see, that's not uniting. Or that's not abiding in our Savior. That's not remaining close to Him. It's rather putting distance between us.

And the connection then between the branch and the vine becomes clogged or interrupted by some blockage.

So this intimate closeness to Christ comes about in part by submissive obedience to His will.

[19:15] So if you obey my commands, you will abide in my love. Just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and abide in His love.

In William Cooper's hymn, Oh, for a closer walk with thee. Cooper senses distance has happened between himself and his Lord. The very title of the song, the very first words.

Oh, for a closer walk with thee. It is a recognition that there's more distance between me and my Savior than I want to live with and that is right.

But he longs for closer communion with Christ, for this union to be experiential, this oneness to be lived out in his relationship with Christ.

And in verse 3, he puts his finger on the problem. The dearest idol I have known, whatever that idol be, help me to tear it from thy throne and worship only thee. You see, there was the reason for the distance.

[20:16] Some idol, something that his affections were given to more than Christ, that had cropped up in his life, perhaps even imperceptibly. But there it was now. And his affections for Christ had been drained away to some other thing or person.

And he's saying, I don't want it to be so. I want it removed. Whatever that idol be, as dear as it be, help me to tear it from your place, your throne, and worship only thee.

That that closer walk with thee might be experienced. All the hymnody that speaks of this, Nearer, still nearer, close to thy heart. Draw me, my Savior, so precious thou art.

Nearer, still nearer, Lord to be thine. Sin with its follies, I gladly resign. All its pleasures, pomp and its pride, give me but Jesus, my Lord crucified. There's this sense that what destroys nearness and closeness is sin.

Your sins have separated you from your God. Experientially. Not objectively and putting you back under sin and under the wrath of God.

[21:21] He's not speaking in those terms at all. There's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Never will be. Never can be condemnation. But it can interrupt the Father-Son,

the vine, branch, intimacy that creates fruitfulness and joy and love in your heart for the Savior.

That's what Donnelly is pressing us to. And that's what Jesus is pressing us to when he says, Abide in me. Stay close to me. These writers of these hymns knew that it was sinful disobedience that put distance between them and the Savior.

And they want it gone. They want it gone. So, to abide in Christ is to allow no unresolved tension to remain. Even as with your spouse, we should not let the sun go down on our wrath.

So with Christ, we should not let a day go by. But the accounts are cleared. And that relational closeness is restored.

So we abide by faith. We see him as our vine. And we see ourselves attached to him. We live in the light of that reality. We abide by obedience. And yet there's more.

[22 : 39] We abide by communion. Communion. You can hear the word union in that, can't you?

We abide by communion. Remember, the vine's a real person.

Well, that immediately speaks then of relationship and of having dealings, personal dealings with that one. That means we're talking to each other. We're sharing ourselves with him.

We're fellowshiping on the deepest level. J.C. Ryle put it this way. He's just expanding and amplifying Jesus' words to us. Abide in me. And Ryle says, Abide in me.

Listen to Jesus now, Christian, talking to you. Abide in me. Cling to me. Stick fast to me. Live a life of close and intimate communion with me.

Get nearer and nearer to me. Roll every burden on me. Cast your whole weight on me. So now, it's at this point that our daily devotions become so critical.

[23 : 41] Sometimes we just think of them as a discipline. They are that. But sometimes we think of them just as a discipline, as a mere ritual to do. And we read so many chapters and we pray for so many people on our list.

And off we go. So, but this union with Christ should give us a different view of our daily devotions. The sad fact is that it's possible in all of this to miss the lover of our soul.

To miss the significance of what we're to be doing in our daily devotions. That's meeting with a person. Meeting with the living Christ and drawing near to Him.

And that is nothing less than the branch receiving from the vine. That's what's happening in our daily devotions. The branch is sucking from the vine.

Drawing all strength and grace to help in our time of need. See yourself as you come to your daily devotions tomorrow. As a branch coming to the vine.

[24 : 50] View it in that light. We abide in Christ by communion. With Him. Strength enters our hearts then. Through the two main means of grace in our daily devotions.

The Word of God. Where He speaks to us. And His Word is life. And His Word is meat. And His Word is water to our souls. Notice verse 7. How He refers to His words.

Jesus refers to His words. In the context of abiding in Him. John 15, 7. If you abide in me. And then He expands on what that means.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you. You see it's in union with Christ that we abide in Him and His words abide in us.

We feed on Christ in His Word. He's telling us. You say, Oh, I have a fine relationship with Jesus. I just don't read the Bible. I'm sorry, friend. Jesus says that's impossible.

[25 : 55] That's like a branch staying on the ground having a relationship with the vine. It just doesn't happen that way. Rather, the means by which the branch draws from the vine is by His Word.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you. That's where the strength of Christ comes to His branches.

Where we listen to His voice and we're changed in the process. Every day we're placing ourselves before this life-changing Word. It's living and active and we become different people because of it. We're poured into its mold. And we take on its shape. A life shaped by the words of Christ. That's all involved in what it means to get nearer to Jesus.

We listen to Him. We listen to His Word and obey. So we're drawing nourishment from Christ. Faith, hope, love, patience, endurance.

[27 : 01] Every virtue from that fullness of grace that's in Jesus. And then the other side of the devotions that we have are prayers to Him where we speak to Him.

Again, this is an intimate union likened to a bride and a bridegroom as well as likened to a branch in the vine. And so we talk back to Him.

He speaks to us. But what's a dialogue if it's not two? It's not a monologue that Jesus just speaks to us. That's the Word of God.

It's Jesus speaking to us but there's to be a response and that's our prayers to Him. And we pray over that Word. He's taught to us. Well, we answer Him.

As He's shown us a sin, we confess it to Him. As He's shown us a promise, we thank Him and we trust Him for it. As He's shown us a blessing, we praise Him for it. As He's shown us an attribute of Himself, we glory in it and we honor Him for it.

[28:00] It's a two-way street, this union with Jesus. And we notice that in verse 5 again here of John 15. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask.

That's the language of prayer, isn't it? Ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you. Prayer is part of the way that we maintain this vital communion with Jesus.

We tell Him everything. We tell Him our fears. We tell Him our hurts. We tell Him what's overwhelming us.

We tell Him our joys. We just pour it out. Pour out your hearts before Him. That's the communion. That's the intimacy of union with Jesus.

We tell Him everything. Hebrews 4 and verse 16. After telling us that we have a great high priest who's gone through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess because we do not have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with us.

[29:10] But we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet was without sin. So then, let us approach the throne of grace with confidence.

Why? So that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. There He sits upon a throne of grace. Who is He? He's my great high priest.

He's there for me. And so I'm invited because He's there for me to come to Him with confidence that I might receive grace from Him. That's sucking.

That's the branch sucking virtue from the vine. I receive grace to help me in my time of need. And it's all in response to asking.

Coming to the throne of grace where Jesus loves to answer prayer. So the two-way communion with the soul in Christ is what it means to abide in Him.

[30:06] J.C. Ryle, again, so personal in applying this to us, the relationship between Christ and the believer. He says, to abide in Christ then means to keep up the habit of constant close communion with Him.

To be always leaning on Him. Resting on Him. Pouring out our hearts to Him. Using Him as our fountain of life and strength.

As our chief companion and best friend. And He says, the greatest saints have always lived nearest to Christ. So we need to give attention to those means that increase the flow of sap between the vine and the branch.

The Bible. The words of Jesus dwelling in us. Abiding in us. And prayer. Asking from this gracious Lord on the throne of grace.

So I have to ask you, how are you doing in your daily intake of the word? And prayer. Folks, this is where the connection between Jesus and you and this vital union takes place.

[31:18] That's where we draw all of our strength. Now what's promised in our verses for those who give themselves to abiding in Christ? What, in verses 4 and 5, what's the promise held out?

What does Jesus say will be the result if you abide in Him and He abides in you? What is it? Fruitfulness.

Fruitfulness. That's the promise. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Verse 5. Well, it follows, doesn't it?

Being attached to Him, we will bear much fruit. fruit. The sap of divine grace is flowing uninterruptedly from Christ into the abiding believer.

It cannot help. Let's say the branch cannot help but bear fruit. If He's got that sap flowing through Him, He will bear fruit. Now what's the fruit?

[32:25] What does the Bible hold out as fruit? There's not just one answer. There's many answers. What does the Bible have? Okay, the fruit of the Spirit.

A ninefold fruit there. Of course, none of us need any more love or joy or peace or patience or kindness or goodness or faithfulness or gentleness or self-control.

That's the fruit. And if we abide in Christ, He promises we will bear much of that. You can't help but because you're sucking nourishment from Christ Himself who is the pinnacle of every one of those virtues.

What else is fruit? Any other references in the Bible to fruit? good works. Okay, good works are referred to as the fruits of a believer.

Really anything that Christ does in you and works out through you. How about your ministry? Your ministry to other believers? I trust you're all doing that.

[33:40] You have a ministry to each other in the body of Christ. Your ministry will bear fruit. Your ministry to each other. Your ministry to the world speaks of success and effectiveness in terms of fruit.

That we'll see fruit from our labors. One sows another waters, but the Lord gives the increase. He gives a harvest.

He makes it fruitful. So, all of this spoken of in the Bible as fruit. And here's the promise that if we abide in Him and He in us then will bear much of this.

And it's fruit that will last, verse 16 says. Fruit that will last. What a thrilling prospect. Not fruit that's here for a day and gone or sticks around for a month and then it evaporates, but fruit that lasts for all eternity.

What a promise. He will bear much fruit. You see, we've got to go back to by faith. See, who it is we're united to.

[34:43] We've not been engrafted into some sickly stock. We've been engrafted into Christ. We're of good stock, you see. We're grafted into Him.

And that should make us confidently optimistic in attempting great things for God. We should attempt more than what we and ourselves are able to do. We should attempt things that one united to Jesus is able to do.

And we should do it with great expectation that we will find help. Again, it's only the omnipotent one that we are connected to. So that should make us very adventuresome in doing things for Christ and expecting His help and success.

It's true that apart from me, you can do nothing, Jesus says. But we're not apart from Him. We're united to Him. So, great cause for expectation. Do you need motivation to abide in Christ?

Verse 8 gives it, This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourself to be my disciples. Wow, there's the motivation that turns on every Christian.

[36:02] That's something that will get you to do things that nothing else would. It's to your Father's glory. It manifests the life of Jesus. It shows that you're a disciple of Jesus and Jesus is glorified by the life that is like His.

And so, the Father's glory is the motivation here to remaining very close to Jesus and so bearing fruit. And then He ends with the warning, apart from me, you can do nothing.

It's a double negative in the Greek. It's nothing, no nothing at all. You can do nothing, absolutely nothing, apart from me, Jesus says. So just think of that branch lying on the ground beneath the apple tree.

And maybe ice during the winter has broken it off and there it lies. And that's you apart from Christ. You can do absolutely nothing. Not that you remain inactive like a twig.

No, you're a person and you live very active lives. You're real busy. But as far as any effective fruit, absolutely zero. apart from me, you can do nothing.

[37:06] Interruption of the flow of divine sap makes spiritual fruitfulness impossible. And this cause then of little fruitfulness may be right here.

Marcus Dodd says, when we feel our leaf fading, this is speaking of your spiritual life, when we feel our leaf fading, when we feel sapless, heartless for Christian duty, reluctant to work, and fruitless when we do, then the point that needs to be looked into is the point of our connection with Christ. Right here. If the branch is shriveled up in sapless, then the fault isn't with the vine, it's a very verdant vine, but we need to look into the point of connection.

Has something stopped the flow from this fruitful Savior to one of his branches? The very same things that in the parable of the four soils choke out the word and make it unfruitful in the unbeliever's life are the same things that can cause the believer's life to be less fruitful.

The cares of life, just filling your life up with all these cares and concerns of everyday life, the deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things, living the materialistic life that will kill and strangle this connection to Jesus and it will limit your fruitfulness.

[38:33] So the remedy for fruitlessness is to renew our fellowship with Christ. Now, in conclusion, some of you are familiar with Screwtape Letters by C.S.

Lewis, a senior devil writing to his nephew, a devil in training, on how to tempt believers. who served the enemy, capital E, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I want you to think for a moment, if you were the devil, where would you place the heat of your attack on the Christian? If you realize that glory comes to God by the Christian bearing much fruit, and if bearing fruit comes from their consciously abiding in Jesus, where would you press the attack?

God, I would write a letter this way. My dear Wormwood, excuse me, my dear Wormwood, don't get nervous about all that she is doing for the enemy.

Just touch her at the decisive point, her union and communion with him. Cut off that communication link, that supply route, and all her supplies of grace will be interrupted and then she can do nothing.

[39:53] Not that she stops doing anything, but all her busyness does nothing to weaken our cause or to strengthen the enemy's cause. So attack her at the point of her union and communion with him.

Seek to introduce some blockage, some idol to hinder the flow of grace, some distraction, that draws her away from fellowship with him and away from the book and from prayer.

Obstruct that union with some sin that puts distance between Christ and her, some ongoing controversy, some point of pride and unwillingness to confess and to renounce sin.

Labor to get something, yes anything, Wormwood, between her soul and the enemy. Because if she stays close to him, your work with her will be in vain and you will find yourself fighting against omnipotence.

Your affectionate uncle, screw tape. Well, that's to borrow from the words of at least the form of C.S. Lewis. Let us realize that we're not to be ignorant of Satan's devices.

[41:08] If this vital link of our union with Jesus is the supply route to our souls, you can bet he'll be right there seeking to obstruct it. So let's hear Christ calling us again this day to abide in him, to get closer to him.

Our union with Christ is the ground of our justification, it's the ground of our sanctification, our being set free from sin, it's the ground of our fruitfulness, and next time we'll see its implications for our life together in the body of Christ as each of us individually are united to him, so we find ourselves united to each other.

Well, our time's gone. If there are questions, we'll take them next time. May the Lord help us to draw near.