

The Oneness of the Believers with the Son

- 1 One with Thee, Thou Son eternal,
 Joined by faith in spirit one,
 Share we in Thy death inclusive
 And Thy life, O God the Son.
 One with Thee, Thou Son beloved,
 Part of Thee become thru grace,
 Heirs with Thee of our one Father,
 We're Thy Spirit's dwelling place.
- 2 One with Thee, Thou Son incarnate,
 Born with Thee, the Man of worth,
 We, the members of Thy Body,
 Sojourn with Thee here on earth.
 One with Thee, Thou Son anointed,
 Sharing too the Spirit's pow'r,
 We in full cooperation
 Labor with Thee hour by hour.
- 3 One with Thee, Thou Son forsaken,
 Judgment and the curse we've passed;
 We to sin are dead forever,
 Hell beneath our feet is cast.
 One with Thee in resurrection,
 Death can never us oppress;
 Live we in Thy new creation,
 Bearing fruits of righteousness.
- 4 One with Thee, Thou Son ascended,
 Seated with Thee on the throne,
 Thine authority we share and
 Rule with Thee, Thy rank our own.
 One with Thee, Thou Son returning,
 Glorified with Thee we'll be,
 E'er to manifest Thy beauty,
 One with Thee eternally. (*Hymns, #475*)

The oneness of God with man and man with God is the central theme of the Bible. The above hymn, written by Watchman Nee, portrays an experiential oneness of the Christian believer with the Triune God, a coinherence in life that has been accomplished in Jesus Christ but must be realized and practiced through the instant and constant renewal of our personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. As believers, we can and should live out in a daily and detailed way the experiences of Christ's incarnation, anointing, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, with a vibrant expectation of His ever-imminent return in glory.

One with the Eternal and Beloved Son

Stanza 1 begins by speaking of our oneness with the eternal Son of God. In our relationship with God, everything depends on this wonderful person who has come to be the dynamic element that connects and joins God to man and man to God. *Joined by faith in spirit one* indicates the channel and the essence of this union. The channel, on our part, is the exercise of faith; the essence, on His part, is Christ as the Spirit of God joining with our spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). The term *grace* in this stanza indicates another indispensable aspect of this joining. Grace comes to us from the Father in the Son; we must exercise our will to believe and must exercise our spirit to receive this grace.

The faith that saves us and unites us with God in Christ must be exercised by our believing into the resurrected Christ. Apart from being joined by faith to the person of the resurrected Christ Jesus, we have no hope; everything else is vanity (cf. Acts 4:12). He is the unique One who is absolute for God and who satisfies God. Our act of faith is an identification with the Lord Jesus as the only One who makes God accessible (cf. Eph. 2:18). Faith is the channel bringing us into oneness with the Son eternal. The spirit in man is the human organ into which the Spirit of Christ enters to join Himself to man and man to Himself.

Through the fall of Adam, man's spirit became deadened, unresponsive, and unable to be joined to God; the Bible tells us that we were dead in offenses and sins (v. 1). But based on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, through the efficacy of the Spirit, our spirit has been enlivened. We must learn to know our spirit and use our spirit to experience God's full salvation, being joined to the Lord in a precious union: "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). There is an organic joining, a life union, in which the human spirit and the divine Spirit become one spirit, the dynamic issue of God's salvation.

We are also one with Christ as the beloved Son of God. In this aspect of His person, we have become a part of the firstborn Son through grace. We are participants in grace to the extent that we, the many brothers of the firstborn

Son, become together with Him heirs of our one Father. Our union with the Son is the issue of the grace of God. The word *grace* is often defined as “unmerited favor.” Grace, however, is not merely unmerited favor. The Bible’s use of the word often indicates that grace is personified; that is, grace is God Himself coming to us in Christ and communicated into us as the Spirit to become everything to us. It is by this grace—God the Father in the Son and as the Spirit, dispensing the Triune God into us and mingling Himself with us—that we have become a part of Him. Through this grace we, as the redeemed and regenerated elect, have inherited full sonship together with the firstborn Son (cf. Rom. 8:29-30). As born-again believers, we have the same one Father and are heirs together with Christ (Heb. 2:11; Rom. 8:15-17).

When the Spirit joins with our spirit, we become the Spirit’s dwelling place for the fulfilling of God’s purpose, the building up of His temple on the earth (1 Cor. 3:16-17). God must have one corporate entity, not a multitude of saved and sanctified believers who remain independent and scattered. One may be a very spiritual believer yet fail to realize God’s desire to build up a corporate dwelling place. The establishing of the Spirit’s dwelling place requires more than redeemed sinners and even more than just regenerated and consecrated believers. It requires our being built up into one corporate house of God.

Being One with the Son in All His Living and Work

The remaining stanzas detail the ways in which we are identified with every aspect of Christ’s wonderful person and work. We need to be exercised to study and to grasp by faith the great opportunity and responsibility of living and working together with Him. Stanza 2 speaks of our oneness with the incarnate Christ. Before His incarnation Christ was the Son of God in His divinity (John 1:18; Rom. 8:3), but through incarnation He put on the flesh of humanity. Through His incarnation Jesus Christ, as God mingled with man, became a prototype of the believers’ mingling with God. In our oneness with the incarnated Son, we are the same as He is in life and nature, and we grow together with Him through His death and His resurrection. Only in the divine-human nature of Christ can individual believers be built together practically as members of His Body.

Our growing also involves sojourning. As we sojourn here on the earth, it is critical that we grow up into Him through the transforming work of the Spirit. We must become one corporate expression, one corporate man in Christ (cf. Eph. 4:12-13). In our organic union with Christ and all the members of His Body, we are being constituted to become one with one another

and one with God. We are members of Christ, and we are being built up with one another not by the effort and force of our zeal or will but by the infusing, transforming, and conforming power of the divine life operating in us and constituting us as the church, His Body (cf. 1:19-23).

In addition to shining on us regarding our inner life and growth, the Bible enlightens us still further to see the divine action by which God has joined us to Christ as the anointed One of God. This is a matter of the outer anointing and power; it is not by our human effort that we are attached to Christ, and it is not by our human virtues that we are anointed to serve God. Rather, we all are joined to Christ by the dynamic will of God, and we are under the anointing of the Spirit to labor together with one another in Christ for the carrying out of the divine will of God in the power of the anointing Spirit.

Stanza 3 speaks of our being joined with the forsaken Christ in His crucifixion. When He died, we died together with Him to sin, death, and judgment (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:2; Heb. 9:14, 27-28). We no longer have to live in fear of death; it has lost its sting (2:14-15; 1 Cor. 15:55-57). Everything of the old nature has been dealt with, Satan has been destroyed, and hell and darkness have been thoroughly dealt with. Day by day we die with Him so that His life may be manifested to and in others; our outer man is decaying, but our inner man is being renewed daily, more and more unto glory (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16-18).

To many of us this is only doctrine. Day by day we may struggle to be “good Christians.” It is expected of us, and we expect it of ourselves; but if we are honest, we will admit our failure. We may lament our deficiency and do our best to hide it from others. Watchman Nee urges that, instead, we seize the unique solution to our problem by accepting, in an absolute way, God’s evaluation of us, which is that we are good for nothing but death.

What is God’s valuation? His valuation is that we should die. We only deserve to die. There is no other way to take. It is useless to try to repair or mend. There is no possibility of progress, and we cannot change ourselves. We are completely useless, and there is nothing we can do except die. Consequently, God included us in the death of the Lord Jesus. His putting us on the cross is an indication of His valuation of us. Please remember that the cross is God’s appraisal of us. God has shown us that we only deserve to die and that there is no hope with us. (52)

Because God realized our utter worthlessness, He caused Christ to be crucified on our behalf and included us in Christ’s crucifixion. Only when we say Amen to His

evaluation and to the accomplished fact will our experience match our doctrinal knowledge of the cross. Only then will we be genuinely crucified with Christ in a practical and experiential way. We must be one with Him as the Son forsaken; then all judgment, curse, and sin, all failure and shame, will be under our feet.

When we accept our place with Him on the cross, we are released to enjoy Him in His resurrection. Stanza 3 also speaks of our oneness with Christ in the resurrection life, which oneness is the subject of the prayer of the Lord Jesus recorded in chapter 17 of the Gospel of John. In the indwelling Spirit of resurrection, the believers are one with one another and one with God the Father and with the Son even as the two are one. Through the Spirit of God who indwells us, we become one with the Triune God in His divine life by means of the transmission of the resurrection life into us (cf. Eph. 1:19-23).

Whereas the life of the Divine Trinity is communicable, the Godhead is not. Before His prayer in John 17, the Lord affirmed the anticipated joining of His elect with the Father in the Son when He declared, "In that day [the day of Christ's resurrection] you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (14:20). Our oneness with God was established in the resurrection life of the Son (cf. v. 19). It is a oneness that brings man into a mutual indwelling of God with man and man with God through the dynamic power of the resurrection life of Christ.

Stanza 4 speaks of our union with the ascended Christ. To the unbelievers and the unlearned in the things of God, it is nonsensical to declare that we are seated with Christ on the throne; however, the Word of God clearly tells us that when Christ was raised from the dead, we were raised together with Him, and when He was seated on the throne of God, we were seated together with Him (Eph. 2:6). Objectively, this has been fully accomplished in the total victory of Christ as Head over all things to the church (1:19-23). Subjectively, the overcomers will experience this in the coming kingdom age according to the promise of the One who now stands at the door and knocks, saying, "He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Moreover, this promise is effectual in the present age also. Those who receive the abundance of grace and of

the gift of righteousness through faith in the triumphant Christ reign now in life (Rom. 5:17). There is a valuable footnote by Witness Lee in the Recovery Version regarding reigning in life:

The life we have received does not merely save us from a few things; rather, it enthrones us as kings to reign over all things. This is much higher than being saved in life. We have received righteousness objectively, but we still need to continually receive the abundance of grace so that we can reign in life subjectively. This reigning is defined in [the remaining chapters of the book of Romans]; all the matters expounded there are the issue not of our endeavoring but of our receiving the abundance of grace. (v. 17, note 3)

When Christ returns, we will be manifested together with Him in His glory. This is the goal of God's economy—to produce a people on the earth who express God in His glory.

IN OUR ONENESS WITH THE
INCARNATED SON, WE ARE THE
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The oneness of the believers with the incarnated, anointed, crucified, resurrected, ascended, and glorified Lord constitutes us with the same life and nature that He possesses; furthermore, our life union with Him elevates, empowers, and enriches us to be the same as He is in our daily living. The application of His experiences in His process of incarnation,

anointing, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension makes us more than conquerors through Him who loved us (8:37), those eagerly awaiting His return. The unqualified and unambiguous proclamation of the Scriptures resonates with the celebration of the intimate and organic joining of God to man. God's present need is for a group of believers to take seriously what has been accomplished in and through Christ, acknowledge their inadequacy to do anything apart from Christ, and fully embrace in faith the resurrection life that is now operating in them in power to bring them into a practical, experiential union with the Lord.

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Works Cited

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