

REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST
Part XXIII: Applying The Truth That Believers Have A Heavenly Association

I. Introduction

- A. In His high priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus acknowledged to God the Father that His immediate disciples, and all those who would come to believe in Him through His immediate disciples' words, were not of the world, even as He was not of the world, John 17:16. He furthermore asked the Father that His disciples be sanctified, that is "separated" from the spiritually corrupt world via the Word of God, the truth, John 17:17.
- B. That sanctifying truth in part is presented in Scripture's revelation of the believer's heavenly association, one of the 33 positions every believer has when he trusts in Christ for salvation. (Lewis S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. III, "Soteriology," p. 254-257) We view that truth for our practical sanctification (as follows):

II. Applying The Truth That Believers Have A Heavenly Association.

- A. The believer is a partner with Christ in spiritual life, motivating him to live in righteous alignment with Christ:
 - 1. 1 John 5:11-12 claims a believer's eternal life is tied to Christ's life, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 902.
 - 2. Realizing this motivates a believer to live rightly since Christ Who is his life is righteous, Colossians 3:4.
- B. The believer is a partner with Christ in heavenly position, motivating him to live for God and not man's glory:
 - 1. Ephesians 2:6 teaches that the believer is spiritually positioned in Christ on His heavenly throne in great honor and glory all through the grace of God.
 - 2. Realizing this motivates a believer to focus on living for God's glory and not for the glory of this world.
- C. The believer is a partner with Christ in service, motivating him to serve God with Christ:
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 1:9 claims the believer is called into the fellowship of Christ and 1 Corinthians 15:58 claims believers' works are also performed in the spiritual sphere of Christ, that is, "in the Lord."
 - 2. Realizing this motivates a believer to perform his work to please God versus pleasing people of this world.
- D. The believer is a partner with Christ in suffering, motivating him to suffer for the sake of righteousness:
 - 1. 1 Peter 4:12-13 with Philippians 1:29 and Acts 9:4, 16 et al. reveal that believers in Christ are assigned of the Lord to suffer in partnership with Christ in a unique, spiritual bond.
 - 2. Realizing this motivates a believer to suffer for doing good and not for doing what is evil, 1 Peter 4:15-16.
- E. The believer is a partner with Christ in prayer, motivating him to pray in alignment with God's will:
 - 1. John 14:12-14 predicts how believers will accomplish much by prayer in Christ's name.
 - 2. Realizing this motivates a believer to pray for spiritual productivity in ministry, 1 John 3:22; 5:14-15.
- F. The believer is a partner with Christ in spiritual betrothal, motivating him to live righteously for eternity:
 - 1. Every believer is part of Christ's spiritual Bride, the true Church, which Bride will be wed to Christ so that at His Second Coming to earth, the believer's service record will be seen by all, Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7-9.
 - 2. Realizing this motivates a believer to minister righteously in view of his future eternal rewards for service.
- G. The believer is a partner with Christ in future expectation, motivating him faithfully to keep focused on what is eternally valuable as opposed to what is of temporal value in this life, 1 John 2:17a,b:
 - 1. The "blessed hope" of the rapture of the Church (Titus 2:13) and Christ's own expectation of the future culmination of all things that is revealed in Hebrews 10:13 **both** exist in contexts where believers stand in need of faithfully remaining motivated to live righteously, Titus 1:10-12; 2:11-13; 3:14; Heb. 10:35-39.
 - 2. Realizing this motivates a believer *faithfully to keep on* living righteously in accountability to God!

Lesson: *At salvation, the believer possesses a heavenly association of partnership with Christ, a partnership involving his spiritual life, his heavenly position, his service, his suffering, his prayer, his spiritual betrothal and his future expectation. Realizing all this motivates the believer to live righteously as Christ is righteous, to live for God's glory and not for the glory this world offers, to please God versus pleasing people in this world, to suffer for righteousness, to pray for spiritual productivity, to live righteously in view of eternal rewards and to continue to remain motivated faithfully to live righteously in view of one's final accountability to the Lord.*

Application: *(1) May we realize that our heavenly association with Christ should control our entire orientation and focus in life, to turn us from desiring the goals of this life to the goals that God offers us in eternity. (2) With this realization, may we adjust our orientation and focus in life and ministry away from this world to the heavenly realm to which we are destined. (3) In practice, this adjustment involves subjecting all we do to performing each activity in alignment with eternity's values, that we invest our time, talents and resources to living for and serving*

the Lord, cf. Matthew 13:44-46. Like the Apostle Paul wrote, each believer should come to assert, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Philippians 1:21 KJV.