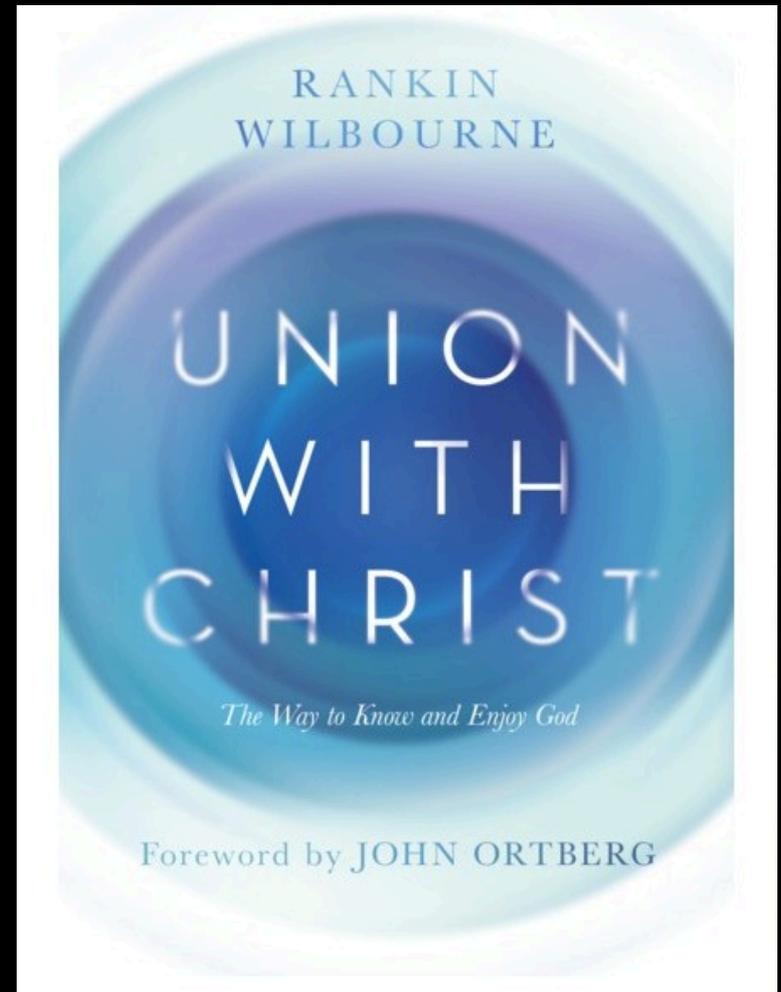


Union With Christ

1. Living in the Gap

Union with Christ

- Study will be largely based on this book
- Why cover this topic?
 - Something we don't normally consciously think about
 - Scripture does speak in these terms (more than the terms we usually use)
 - Spiritually fruitful to understand and live by this truth
 - I have found it personally encouraging



Identifying the Gap

- John 7:37-38: On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, '**Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**'"
 - Is this our normal experience?
 - What rivers are flowing out of your life?

Identifying the Gap

- Matt 11:28-30: Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest**. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
 - How many of us live in this kind of state of rest?
 - Is this a characteristic of our lives?

The Gap

What the gospel says
is true of me (I'm
forgiven, accepted,
and secure)

What I say I believe

Grand, high
promises of God

How I really see
myself

What I'm experiencing

Gritty details of our
everyday lives

Examples?

Question from a skeptic: "If the gospel is supernatural, as you say, then why doesn't it seem to make more of a difference in the lives of so many who claim to believe it?"

How do We Respond to this Gap?

- We get comfortable with the gap
- We ignore the gap
- We attempt to address the gap by reminding ourselves of the realities of Scripture
- We recognize the gap and it bothers us
- We try not to think about it
- We try to reduce the gap by explaining away parts of scripture “well, that doesn’t really mean...”

Union with Christ is a “Gap-Filler”

- The concept of being united with Christ is not new
 - Calvin: First, we must understand that **as long as Christ remains outside of us**, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us. Therefore ... he had to become ours and **to dwell within us**.
- Christ as “outside of” us vs. Christ uniting his life to ours
- Note: A deep understanding of our union with Christ is not the only gap-filler. What are some others?

Union with Christ: A Central Idea

- John Murray: Nothing is more central or more basic than union with Christ ... it is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.
- For many of us, this idea is not central to our thinking
 - Vague theological concept
 - Not one of the first things to spring to mind when we think of or explain the gospel

Goal of this Class

- We have a better understanding of our union with Christ
- This would have a real impact on our lives
 - Reduce/close the gap between what we say we believe and our real life
 - Deeper, more personal relationship with our Lord
 - Make the truths of the gospel more real in our lives
 - Help us in our fight against sin