**In Christ**

**Part III**

Review:

We have been looking at all that we have in Christ.

In Christ, In Him, In the Lord 164 times in Paul alone.

So how do we get into Christ?

Gal 3:26-27, Rom 6:3-4

Consider all that we have in Christ:

**I. We are redeemed in Christ. Coll 1:13-14. Eph 1:7**

**II. We are Holy/Saints/Sanctified in Christ Phil 1:1, 1 Cor 1:2**

**III. You Are Righteous in Christ 2 Cor 5:21**

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

**IV. You Are Alive in Christ**

Eph 2:1-4 You were dead in your sins, but God made you alive.

**V. You Are a New Creation in Christ**

Have you done something you deeply regret?

Someone you betrayed. A hateful word you said. Did you steal the innocence from someone? Do you wish you could take it back?

If only we could start over….

If only we could get a “mulligan”

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away and look, new things have come.*

**VI. There is No Condemnation for those who are in Christ**

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death*. (Romans 8:1–2)

**VII In Christ You Are Chosen by God**

It’s been 50 years, but…

Not being chosen in PE class for baseball…

Even worse, girls in square dancing.

All of us want to be chosen. We want to be noticed, and not for our deficiencies.

Kid: Look, mom! Look, mom! Look, mom!

God made us this way—to want to be treasured.

This week on campus a student shared thoughts of suicide. She feels empty

 “I am worthless.”

“If I died, no one would miss me.”

Women who stay with abusive men. Why? They need to feel special.

Guess what. In Christ, we are chosen by God. We are treasured by him.

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. (Ephesians 1:4)

God wants you on his team!

God was looking at all the possible teammates, and he chose you.

He wants to be your square dance partner.

GOD CHOSE YOU to be in Christ.

You are chosen, not frozen.

He created the universe for you. He chose you before you were born.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you were also included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. (Ephesians 1:11-13)

You were included in Christ

In Christ you are God’s MVP

Consider this: God looked out on the dance floor, on the baseball field and he said I want Louie I want Cecelia I want \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Eph 2:10 We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which he prepared in advance for us to do.

He has a role for you on his team.

Even when we were not in Christ, he still valued us.

Ex: The lost Son Luke 15:11-32 The lost son walked away from his father and wasted all of his gifts. He would up in the pig pen. Surely my father will be angry at me and never take me back into his graces. But the father still longed for his son. He ran after him. Amazingly, he had lost no value to his father.

If you are outside of Christ, if you are in the pig pen, God is waiting for you so that he can choose you.

This is what the Lord says: “What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.” (Jeremiah 2:5)

Even outside of Christ we are of great value to him, but we can make ourselves worthless in that he is not able use us to glorify him.

Challenge:

If you have been straying, Return to him and let him choose you again. God wants to say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

To the faithful:

Revel in the fact that God has chosen you and live a chosen life—one dedicated to pleasing his/her master.

**VIII We Are All Children of God in Christ**

**Q: What human loves you the most—would make the greatest sacrifice for you? Whose love for you is unconditional or nearly so?**

**Probably it is your parents.**

**There are different kinds of love:**

**Romantic, love of country, love of poetry, of a pet, of child for parent, of pizza, friendship, love of self.**

**But the kind of love which is the best model for God’s love for us is that of a parent for a child. Arguably, maternal is even greater than paternal love.**

**This love times ten is what he have in Christ.**

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (Galatians 3:26)

In Christ God sees you as a proud father/mother. One he wants to lavish favor on.

When we come into Christ, we come into God’s family—not as a cousin or a niece. No, we are children. We are the most highly favored one.

Your mom or dad loved, you, but God is a perfect parent.

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! (Isaiah 49:15)

Rhetorical question: Could a mother forget her nursing baby?

Impossible!!!!!

Luke 15:31 My son, everything I have is yours.

This is what God says to us.

Well, what does God have? It is yours!!!! (his Son, his Spirit)

Let’s take this one step deeper.

Which is greater, the love of a parent for a natural-born child or for an adopted child?

The adopted child is chosen.

My parents did not choose me. I am an 50/50 accidental mixture.

Our first child was an “accident.”

God chose you. He adopted you. He said, “I want that one.”

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (Ephesians 1:4-6)

Ephesians 2:11-13;

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision”… remember that at one time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

And in Ephesians 2:19 we learn;

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household.

Outside of Christ you were foreign. You were other. You were estranged and an alien. But God chose you!!!

 “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.” (Romans 8:16-17) We get the house and everything in the house.

Your future is established. Your inheritance is assured. You are God’s chosen one—his child.

Challenge: Being part of a family has his privileges, but it also has its obligations. Are you taking on the obligations as well as the privileges that come with being part of God’s family?

**IX You Have Secure Love in Christ**

Illustration: Josh has been doing a series on the “bare necessities” of life. Food, shelter, friendship, clothing, water.

One of those bare necessities is security. We cannot live and thrive unless we live in security from harm.

Fear paralyzes us. We cannot have real life in war-torn areas. In war-torn areas of the world, people learn that security as literally as great a need as food and shelter.

Those of us who are in Christ have the greatest kind of security possible. We have security based on the assured love of our Creator.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Where is the love of God found? It is found in Christ. This is the greatest and most secure source of love available to us, by far!

Jesus is the prince of peace. We can live in absolute security with him.

Even death cannot take us away from the loving arms of God!!!!

What terrifies us?

We fear death. This is a visceral fear.

God has death covered by his love. It cannot separate us from Him.

We fear demons—the unknown and unknowable forces of evil in this world.

But we have a secure love in Christ.

We fear the past because we feel we cannot escape our past. We have spiritual PTSD. Our mistakes, our failures.

But we have a secure love in Christ.

We fear the future. The unknown causes us to fear. That is why we fear the darkness. We are in a room, we hear a noise. We are scared to death. Then we turn on the light and feel silly.

In Christ there is literally no reason to fear the future because God owns the future.

Our distant future is a shoe-in.

Phil 1:21-26. Notice Paul’s attitude here. Whether I live or I die it is all the same to me.

(aside: earlier in the chapter I am in prison, but that is cool too, because I get to share my faith. People are preaching out of jealousy and bad motives, that is all good as well…)

What keeps us going in life? It is the sure knowledge that someone loves us—that someone believes in us. Our dad would take out the bullies at school. Who will love us no matter what? Simply for what we are. Well guess what! God is that person times ten.

Challenge: What are you doing in your life which is “risky” because you have a secure love in Christ. What is your security in Christ allowing you to do that you would not otherwise have done?

If the answer is “nothing in particular” then choose today what you will do because of the secure love we have in Christ.