**In Christ**

**Part VI**

Review:

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**

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

*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**

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

**VIII We Are All Children of God 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)

**IX You Have Secure Love in Christ**

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)

**X We have eternal life in Christ Jesus**

*But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 6:22–23)

**XI Peace With God in Christ Jesus**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:6–7)

**XII Fullness of God in Christ Jesus**

**XIII We Have Surpassing Worth in Christ**

**XIV We Are All One in Christ**

Gal 3:26-29

*So in Christ you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew or Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs together according to the promise.*

**XV All the Promises of God Find Their ‘Yes’ in Christ**

Heb 11:13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.

Gen 15:18-21 Abraham was promised, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kennizites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites”

Abraham received a postage-stamp sized piece of this promise. The cave of Machpelah near Mamre, which he bought from the Hittites. (Gen 23:7-20)

In Christ we have so much more right in our laps.

2 Cor 1:18-20a

*But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ.* (2 Corinthians 1:18–20a)

Q: How many promises?

Q: Where?

Similarly, Peter tells us,

*His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.* (2 Peter 1:3–4)

Let us consider just a few of them.

“You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). Checkmark on that one!

“I will be their God, and they will be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33). Got that one covered.

“I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). That one is good to go as well.

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean... I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws” (Ezekiel 36:25–27).

Outside of Christ we had none of those things—not a single one—yet all are “Yes” in Christ. Please take a moment right now to add to this list. What are some of the promises of God you can think of that are made “Yes” in Christ? It will include a great number of promises found in the New as well as in the Old Testament.

Here are a few more:

Heb 13:5, Deut 31:6 “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Matthew 28:20 Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

John 11:25-26

“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.”

Isaiah 54:10

“Though the mountains be shaken

and the hills be removed,

yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken

nor my covenant of peace be removed.” (Isaiah 54:10)

James 1:5

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

Mark 11:24

*“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.”* (Mark 11:24)

Abraham believed God’s promises. To us who believe in Christ, all of God’s promises are “Yes” in him. The way Paul put it concerning Abraham’s faith:

Romans 4:18-22 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Those of us who inherit the faith of Abraham also receive all the promises given to Abraham (although he did not)

To some extent these promises are received already, but not yet.

All his promises are yes in Christ, but the extent to which we realize them depends on our faith.

Challenge: Let us believe God’s promises without wavering in unbelief so that God can deliver on his promises.

How do we do this? We live in such a way that shows we do in fact believe his promises.

We live as if we believe that God will provide all we need.

We live as if we believe that God has overcome the world.

*It is written, “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.* (2 Corinthians 4:13–14)

So, let us not waver in our faith. Let us believe and speak, and let us watch God fulfill all his promises in Christ.

**XVI You Have Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ**

Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Where are all the spiritual blessings found? You guessed it! In Christ.

God really wants to bless us as a father wants to see his children blessed.

But this is no “prosperity gospel.”

It is based on *hesed*. Translated as love, but not primarily a feeling.

as lovingkindness, mercy, loyalty or faithfulness.

Covenant love. Loyal love, in which everyone involved looks out for the best interest of the others, not self.

The love Ruth had for Naomi.

The love God has for us.

Ex: Malachi.

This is what God wants from us.

Because he did not get it from Israel (in Malachi) he could not bless them.

Notice: Every spiritual blessing.

*This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may life and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”* (Deuteronomy 30:19–20)

*Then the Lord your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The Lord will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors.* (Deuteronomy 30:9)

*OT:* primarily physical blessings.

Our blessings are primarily spiritual ones.

Outside of Christ we had some physical blessings, but no spiritual blessings.

How many? However many there are. Every one of them!

Phil 4:19

*And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*

Those needs are primarily spiritual ones.

We don’t get all we want, but we get all we need.

Deep-felt needs.

Here is a good list:

1. Value

2. Purpose

3. Security

4. Love, intimacy

5. Hope

**Value:**

We already talked last week about the surpassing worth we gain in Christ.

**Purpose:**

Illustration: That doctor lady in Boulder. Did not like vacations.

 “Why?” I asked. “Because when I stop working, I think about how meaningless life is and it gets me depressed.”

How demoralizing.

It is not that in the world we had no purpose. This doctor found purpose in her work.

But, when she stopped to think about it… It all vanished in view of eternity.

Like Solomon who said “Meaningless, meaningless…

A purpose with eternal consequences.

We are building something here in Bakersfield that he eternal meaning.

This is greater than any physical blessing

And it gives the physical blessings greater meaning as well.

As Jesus said, “I came that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).

**Security.**

It is impossible to live a blessed life without security.

In places like Syria, Afghanistan, Central Africa the principle thing they seek, even before food, is security. We cannot function without this basic need met.

Take heart, I have overcome the world.

 “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?” (Romans 8:31–32).

As a Christian I cannot be blackmailed.

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:28).

The things we value most cannot be taken from us.

‘“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5–6).

“My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:2).

Our eternal home is already being prepared for us. We can take risks to serve God.

**Intimate, loving relationships.**

We had love outside of Christ, but…

In Christ we have the most important thing in common.

We confess our sins to one another

We look, not only to our own interest but also to the interests of each other (paraphrasing Philippians 2:3–4)

We have greater breadth and depth of love.

**Hope**

Outside of Christ, what did we have to hope in?

The reality of death puts the things we value into perspective

We have a nice vacation, but what does it matter in the face of death?

Illustration: Harold Abrams in 1924 Olympics. Eric Liddle gave up his place in the 100 meter.

Abrams won, but Liddle found him in a bar, depressed. He had reached his life’s goal. So, what next?

He realized that, despite his victory, he had no hope.

In Christ we have hope.

An enduring and confident expectation of eternal life.

Jesus said to Martha about the death of her brother Lazarus, “I am the resurrection and the life. the one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die” (John 11:25–26).

That is the definition of hope.

Truly we have every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Challenge: Let us embrace hesed. Let us have a loyal covenant-love for God so that he can do what he wants as our father—to give us an abundant life and every blessing in Christ.

**XVII The Mystery of God Is Revealed in Christ**

Pontius Pilate “What is truth?” (John 18:38).

Modernists and postmodernists still debate this question today.

Life has many great mysteries.

What is the meaning of life?

Does history have a purpose and a direction, or is everything random?

Why is the avocado pit so large?

Where is truth to be found?

Who holds the keys to the great mysteries of life?

We have shows like X-files. Unsolved Mysteries. Twilight Zone

Old Testament “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Everyone likes a good mystery

In the Old Testament, much was revealed but much was left as a mystery.

The kingdom of God is hinted at in the Old Testament, and a number of clues as to its nature and the time of its coming are provided, but much is hidden. There are dozens of clues as to the Messiah—what he will be like, when and where he will he appear—but much is left to our imagination.

1 Pet 1:10-12

Concerning this salvation (that which is in Christ), the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with greatest care, trying to find out the time and the circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow… Even angels long to look into these things.

So much mystery. So many unanswered questions.

I have some good news to report. In Christ, every important question finds its answer, and every essential mystery is revealed and explained. The mystery of the ages is uncovered in Christ.

Colossians 1:25-27

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. To them God has chosen to make know among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The mystery is Christ in us.

Paul continues with this idea:

Colossians 2:2-3

My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in who are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The mystery *is* Christ.

Not only does he give us the answer. He ***IS*** the answer.

Every important answer is found in him.

What is my purpose? To become like him and to give him glory. We created to do good works, prepared in advance for us to do (Eph 2:1)

What is the meaning of life? Paul: For me to live is Christ.

What is my value? Infinite.

Where am I going/What happens when I die? Thanks to Jesus, to eternal life with God in his kingdom.

What is God’s will? That all be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Who am I? You are a child of God—created in his image.

What is the underlying nature of reality?

The secret of the kingdom of God is revealed in Christ

Mark 4:11 The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside, everything is said in parables.

What is the “secret” of the kingdom of God?

Ephesians 3:3-6

*Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.*

Ephesians 3:8-9

Paul’s goal was “to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God”

The mystery revealed is the means of salvation, first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles. All will inherit the promise together. Who would have thought of that idea?

We do not need the Freemasons and their secret handshakes.

Every important mystery is revealed.

Origin of the universe? Christ! (by him and through him all things were created Coll 1:16)

Is there meaning to history? Yes! Christ is the predestined one. All world events point to Jesus. He is the reason for the pax Romana. He is the one born at the crossroads of Europe, Africa and Asia.

His birth/incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension and return are the focal points of all history.

Why the avocado pit is so large? Sorry….

Christ is the answer to all of the great mysteries of life.

Challenge: That is an easy one.

Make Christ and his mystery known to the world.

Q: Who will you reveal the mystery of Christ to this week?

Let us, as ambassadors, make this mystery known to as many as possible, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory.

**Chapter 26 You Have the Promised Holy Spirit in Christ**