**In Christ**

Q: What is the most common expression in the New Testament to describe a saved person? Christian? Disciple? Saved? No. It is “in Christ.”

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

We will talk about life in Christ, but first let us consider that, at one time, we were outside of Christ.

Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath…

Dead Gratifying the flesh Objects of wrath.

Ephesians 2:12 Remember that at that 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.

Separate Excluded Foreigners Without hope and without God.

This was not good!

And this is the vast majority of everyone you know!!!

But I have good news if you have come into Christ!

So how do we get into Christ?

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

Do we believe into Christ? Do you pray into Christ? Do we confess into Christ? Do we repent into Christ?

Analogy of a house, where inside the house represents being in Christ. Maybe believing is the driveway to the house, confessing is the walkway to the door and repenting is opening the lock to the door. But baptism is when we go through the door.

Analogy of a marriage.

Matthew 22:15-22 Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22:11-13 But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He was not clothed with Christ!!! “How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?” The man was speechless. Then the king told the attendants, “Tie him, hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Consider all that we have in Christ:

**I. We are redeemed in Christ.**

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of his grace.

Coll 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have **redemption**, the forgiveness of sins.

Redeemed: A religious word we do not use in ordinary conversation.

Wikipedia: the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment, or clearing a debt.

Analogy of a pawn shop. You were the property of Satan, but in Christ you were redeemed from slavery to Satan.

We were slaves in Egypt. We could not worship God (Exodus 7:16)

Pharaoh (Satan) owned us.

Jn 8:34-35 Everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

We desperately needed to be redeemed.

John 8:36 If the Son sets you free (redeems you) you will be free indeed.

**II. We are Holy/Saints/Sanctified in Christ**

1 Cor 1:2 to those sanctified in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:1 Saints/Holy “To all God’s holy people (saints) **in Christ** Jesus at Philippi”

In our culture talking about holiness is like talking about walking on Mars.

Were you a saint outside of Christ?

Holy 200 times in NT godes

400 times in OT goddis (ex. The Saints will possess it forever Dan 7:18)

It means a thing set apart so that it can be used by God.

In Christ we are made holy, clean, pure, and useful to God.

I want to be useful to God!

Q: Do you feel holy/sanctified in Christ. What is the value to you of being sanctified?

**Already but not yet.**

Some of the things we are in Christ are also what we are becoming and what we will ultimately be.

It is “Already, but not yet.”

We were saved at baptism, we are being saved and we ultimately and finally be saved.

We have been redeemed. We are being redeemed. We will be redeemed.

We were made holy. We are being made holy and we will be holy.

Paul describes us as what we are becoming in Christ.

We need to emotionally accept as true what God has done to us in Christ.

We need to embrace how God is still making us these things in Christ.

We need to anticipate with great joy what God will finally make us in Christ at the end of time.

But… Let us be glad that God sees us as he will make us—as the final result.

**III You Are Righteous in Christ**

My experience: Most people want to be good.

Even Mafia dons want to be liked for being “good” to their people.

On campus: “I’m good.”

The problem is that, outside of Christ, we are not good.

Mark 10:17-19 No one is good.

Romans 3:9-12 No one is righteous; not even one.

Merrian Webster: “free from guilt or sin : morally right or justified.”

But in Christ….

*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)

God imparts to us righteousness

*What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.* (Philippians 3:8–9)

Outside of Christ you were not good.

What would you pay to be “good?”

Well, guess what, the price is paid.

Challenge: If God has made us righteous, If God has declared us righteous, then let us become what he has made us. Let us hate sin and life for righteousness.

**IV. You Are Alive in Christ**

We were dead.

Q: What are dead people like?

Our spiritual respiration rate was zero.

Our spiritual pulse was flatlined.

We were unresponsive to spiritual stimulus.

We were dead men (or women) walking.

*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

*In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but* ***alive to God in Christ*** *Jesus.* (Romans 6:8–11)

We die with Christ, but we are resurrected with him.

We move from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive.

Which would you prefer, to be spiritually dead, or to be spiritually alive?

If you are in Christ, then you have been given a second chance. What would you pay for that? What are you going to do with this second chance?

**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. Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That is, in Christ, God was reconciling to the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us.* (2 Corinthians 5:17–19 HCSB)

The lies: gone!

The lost innocence: gone!

It is already, but not yet.

We have been made new

We are being made new

We will be made new. We will be given a new body.

Challenge: What will you do with your new life? Do not let it go to waste.

*Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.* (Ephesians 4:22–24)

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

Romans 8:1 no condemnation. “Therefore, there is now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**.

What would it be like living on death row? Not a good place. No hope. Nothing to live for. Waiting for death. That is the worst part.

Why? Because the wages of sin are death (Romans 6:23)

*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)

We have not been found “innocent” for lack of sufficient evidence. No!!!

You have been exonerated.

God says about us “Take off his/her filthy clothes.

*“Come now, let us settle the matter,”*

*says the Lord.*

*“Though your sins are like scarlet,*

*they shall be white as snow;*

*though they are red with crimson,*

*they shall be like wool.”* (Isaiah 1:18)

Challenge: Now that you have been exonerated, what will you do with the new life you have regained?

Let us say it again, and let us shout it from the rooftops: There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. No condemnation. Zero, zip, nada. The verdict is in. Not guilty.

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

It’s been 50 years, but…

Not being chosen in PE class for baseball…

*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.

***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)

In Christ you are God’s MVP

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**

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.

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.

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)

“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**

Along with water, food and shelter, security is one of the core necessities of life.

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!

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.

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?

**X 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)

What is the peace that we have in Christ like? Paul puts it this way in Philippians 4:7: his peace “transcends all understanding.”

It is mind-blowing.

Where do we find peace with God? In Christ!!!!

**XI Fullness of God in Christ Jesus**

For in Christ all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form, and **in Christ you have been brought to fullness.** (Colossians 2:9–10)

What is the best version of “you” you can imagine?

What about becoming like God?

This is the fullness we gain in Christ. We become like Christ and therefore we begin to “smell” like Christ. Our very lives are the tablets on which Christ is revealed as we are made into his image. In other words, the life of Christ is publicized in our lives.

Who, me? Yes, you.

Challenge. Let us present our bodies as living sacrifices so that God can transform us by the renewing of our mind.

**XII We Have Surpassing Worth in Christ**

The world can make us feel insignificant.

You are 0.0000000012% of all humanity

Science: you are worth about $3.50

1972 Ford Pinto $200,000/life

Phil 3:5-11 The worth of being in Christ Jesus.

*But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of* ***the surpassing worth of knowing Christ*** *Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may* ***gain Christ and be found in him****, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ*

Paul “had it made.” Right pedigree Cream of the crop.

What was it worth compared to being in Christ?

**XIII We Are All One in Christ**

Outside of Christ division is an incurable human disease.

But this is different 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.*

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

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? All

Q: Where? In Christ!

**XV 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**.

**XVII The Reality of God Is Found in Christ**

This topic is related, plus I introduced the idea last summer.

The Old Testament is a shadow. It is a mere diorama. It is a symbol. The real thing is found in Christ.

Colossians 2:16-17 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These things are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

**XVIII You Have the Promised Holy Spirit in Christ**

In Christ, God comes and makes his home in our bodies. He lives in us.

Ephesians 1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirt, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

**XIX Freedom in Christ**

Gal 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ set you free.

Gal 5:6 The only thing that matters is faith, expressing itself in love.

1 Cor 9:19-23 I have made myself a [voluntary] slave to everyone, to win as many as possible…. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Challenge: What are you doing with the freedom you have in Christ?

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

We were dead in our sins and in the uncircumcision of our flesh (Coll 2:13)

*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)

XXI In Christ the Veil is Removed

2 Cor 3:16-18