

Subject: *New Life in Christ*

Scripture: *2 Corinthians 5:14-17*

In some cases two words can change your life—just married, new baby, or boot camp—just to name a few. Just think of the little word “in” when you couple it with another word—in trouble or in love—those little expressions mean a lot. The ultimate example is found in the words—in heaven or in hell—because that is a permanent thing.

There are two words you find often in the Bible, especially in Paul’s writings, that describe the Christian life—in Christ. These two words change everything. The Bible says if any person is in Christ he is new creature (creation), old things are passed away and all things become new. In this message we are going to dig in to what it means to be “in Christ.”

1. In Christ we have a new position

This is a new spiritual position. When the Bible speaks of the Christian being “in Christ” it refers to our spiritual position in Christ and our union with Christ. Paul often began his letters by addressing the saints “in Christ” at Colosse, Philippi, and so on. Their physical location was different, but their spiritual position was the same—in Christ.

- Our new position in Christ is revealed in God’s Word

When we are saved our spiritual position is immediately in Christ. It is not something we feel, but it is a spiritual reality confirmed by the Word of God. It is not a feeling, but a fact. It begins at the time of conversion, but it has lasting and eternal consequences.

- Our new position in Christ is established and maintained by faith

To be in Christ is to believe in Christ and be committed to Him. The Bible tells us to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. We either believe in Christ or we will die in our sins.

John 8:24 *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

If we believe in Christ we live by faith and we die by faith.

Hebrews 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

- Our new position in Christ is illustrated in many ways

Christ is the vine and we are the branches (Jn. 15).

Christ is the foundation and we are the building (1 Cor. 3)

Christ is the husband and we are the bride (Eph. 5)

Christ is the head and we are the body (Col. 1)

We are baptized into Christ and united with Him spiritually. Water baptism is a picture of what takes place spiritually.

1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.*

Romans 6:3-6³ *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*⁴ *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*⁵ *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*⁶ *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

Ephesians 2:4-6⁴ *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*⁵ *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us (made us alive) together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*⁶ *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

When Christ died, we died. When He arose, we arose. When He was seated in heaven, we were seated with Him. This is our spiritual position in Christ. This is not something we do. It is something God does for us. It is not based on feeling. It is based on faith in God's Word. In Christ we have a new position.

2. In Christ we have new privileges

- In Christ we have new life

Our new position in Christ means that we are a new creation. Christians aren't just nice people; we are new creatures. We have been made new in salvation.

Ephesians 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

- In Christ we have perfect righteousness

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

This is the very righteousness of Christ imputed (credited) to us by faith. "When He shall come with trumpet song, O may then in Him be found, dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne."

- In Christ we have freedom from condemnation

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

- In Christ we have confidence in prayer

John 15:7 *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

- In Christ we have assurance at Christ's coming

1 John 2:28 *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

- In Christ we have hope for the future resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Revelation 14:13 *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.*

3. In Christ we have new priorities

Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. We look the same, but we're different on the inside. We have new desires, new goals, and new priorities. A priority is something that we put before other things. A priority is something really important. A priority is something we do out of conviction, not out of convenience. What used to be important before salvation is no longer important. What used to be unimportant before salvation now becomes most important. Before we're saved we live mainly on a physical level. After salvation we live mainly on a spiritual level.

- We have a priority to worship God in spirit and truth
- We have a priority to read and study God's Word
- We have a priority to pray for ourselves and others
- We have a priority to know and do God's will
- We have a priority to serve God by serving others
- We have a priority to bear spiritual fruit
- We have a priority to glorify God in our actions and attitudes

Do these priorities describe your life? Since you were saved have old things passed away and have all things become new? Do you love what you used to hate and do you hate what you used to love? How do you spend your time and your money?

Augustine was one of the great leaders of the early church. He had lived a very sinful life before the Lord saved him. A few months after his conversion he saw one of his former girl friends on a public street. She called out to him, "Augustine, look over here, it's me." He answered, "Yes, I can see that. But it's not me."

"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." In Christ we have a new position. In Christ we have new privileges. In Christ we have new priorities. To be in Christ changes everything.

You can be in church and not be in Christ. You can be in a Bible class and not be in Christ. You can be in a ministry serving others and not be in Christ. Remember what Jesus said:

Matthew 7:22-23 ²² *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* ²³ *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*