

The Christian's Position "In Christ"

Lesson #8 – Our Life is Now Unto the Father

In lesson #7 we learned that "in Christ":

1. We are eternally secure by our very nature of being in Christ;
2. That we are inheritors of all spiritual blessings and treasures,
3. That our certain hope is established in the very immutability of God,
4. That our current worship of the Father is included in the worship with the "communion of the saints" from all time.

This final lesson of our series will focus on the Father-centric nature of our faith which is entirely "in Christ".

I. Our Ministry to God is Spiritual:

We err when we misunderstand the nature of God's call to the lost. When we proclaim Christ to all people, there is a selective effectual call from God through the work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of certain (elect) lost person's heart.

1. We proclaim to all, but God "effectually calls" His own from among lost men and women.
2. We are privileged to proclaim Christ to all regardless of results!
3. In this proclamation of Christ to each person, we glorify the Father! **We never fail!!**
4. But God, through the Holy Spirit, administers an "effectual" call to win His "elect" to Christ.
5. God illuminates lost men's hearts in saving faith such that they first see their desperate, sinful condition and need for redemption unto holiness.
6. The elect lost man first repents in fear and trembling and flees to the foot of the cross receiving glorious, immeasurable grace from God. Their heart is then regenerated as an entirely new creation in Christ!

God be glorified! We then serve God with an entirely new faithfulness. Praise God!

This ministry to God is not carnal, e.g. it is not of our own strength or our own wisdom, it is of God's purpose working through us by the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lost men by the illumination of their hearts unto regeneration. Our words are but a vehicle through which the Holy Spirit works. What a glorious privilege to participate in this eternal work of Christ through our feeble but faithful proclamation!

Rom 15:14-21 *And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another. ¹⁵But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. ¹⁸For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, ¹⁹in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ²⁰And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation; ²¹but as it is written, "THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND." *Is 52:15**

Paul here is very careful not to touch the glorious work of God in bringing these Gentiles to a saving knowledge of Christ. His ministry is that of a servant, of a proclaimer, faithfully

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proclaiming Christ, and in that privileged ministry, bringing great glory to the Father because of his faithful service to the Father.

CAUTION: Here is an important warning that must not be ignored!

Rom 16:17-20 *Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. ¹⁸For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. ¹⁹For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. ²⁰The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

Be every diligent about discerning false teaching!

II. We Have an Eternal Purpose "In Christ":

1. We are called to be a new creatures in Christ. The old man, formerly in Adam must be put to death!
2. We are called to not just repent of our sins, but that we might be changed. That we must be set apart for God's use, to be sanctified.
3. We are called that we might let the Holy Spirit conform our lives to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 12:1-8 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. ³For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. ⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

1. Our bodies are dedicated to serving God as a living and holy sacrifice unto God. v. 1a
2. This service to God is *your spiritual service of worship.* v. 1b
3. We are NOT to be conformed to the world and its ways! v. 2a
4. In serving God and conforming to Christ, we demonstrate God's will which is always good, acceptable, & perfect. v. 2b
5. Through your faith that God has allotted to you, judge yourselves as you really are. v. 3
6. We serve God with certain functions that God has chosen for us. We are a vital part of Christ's body here on earth. We are not independent of our brothers and sisters in Christ. vv. 4-5
7. We are to diligently serve God with the gifts that He has chosen to give to us. Do not compare yourselves with one another. vv. 6-8

Thus:

1 John 2:8-11 *On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. ⁹The*

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*one who says he is **in the Light** and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. ¹⁰The one who loves his brother abides **in the Light** and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

Note: There are 3 more passages in the NT that refer to Christ with the phrase: "In the Light", raising our total references referring to God's elect saints from 189 to 192. These two listed above and also John 12:36 where those *in Christ* are referred to as "sons of Light".

If we love Christ, we by nature must love His body here on this earth, which is the Church Local and Universal, the saints of God. We have an eternal purpose in loving our brothers and sisters "in Christ". We love because it is a repeated command to love the brotherhood and because the Holy Spirit directs us to so love.

III. We Have Become Holy "In Christ":

God is holy. The word holy comes from the Greek word ἁγιαζο (hagiadzo) meaning to make holy, to sanctify, to consecrate, to dedicate, to set apart from that which is common. e.g. we are to set our lives apart from the values of this world. Our understanding of that which is true must be grounded in the wisdom of Scripture foremost. We only supplement our interpretation of Scripture with General Revelation (history, culture, science, etc. using great care to depend solidly only on Scripture itself.

1Cor 3:16-17 *Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.*

1 Cor 6:17-20 *But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. ¹⁸Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

Because we have been born again "into Christ", transformed into a new creation, we are "dedicated" (sanctified) by God for His service. We are sinners saved by grace, but that phrase can be very misleading if you don't know "the rest of the story." What you must understand is that: *Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*^{Rom 8:29-30} This passage is known as the "Golden Chain of Salvation".

Yes, we are holy because God has chosen us for a holy purpose and has "dedicated" us to that purpose of service.

IV. Conclusion:

In Christ, we are born again into a spiritual life that the world knows nothing of. We walk according to ways that the world cannot know of. We walk according to spiritual hope, joy, commitment, discipleship, and service that the world cannot rightly judge because they are blind and even dead to spiritual things.

In Christ our lives are filled with transcendent purpose that the world cannot know of. Our purpose is foolishness to them because of their lack of possessing true life. They cannot (will not) see or understand the wisdom of God.

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They can be relatively moral and are even likely to be religious in way. They are no children of God, they are not "in Christ".

In Christ we are set apart for service to God. We are no longer part of this world. We live in it and represent Christ to the world as Ambassadors of Christ in our proclamation and in our living, but they cannot be part of this life of Truth without regeneration by the Holy Spirit of God.

Important Quotes

Instead of hindering the development of Christian character, a true grasp and appreciation of God's sovereignty will forward it. Just as the sinner's despair that he cannot help himself is the first prerequisite of a sound conversion, even so the loss of all confidence in himself is the first essential in the believer's growth in grace. And just as the sinner's recognition that he cannot help himself will cast him into the arms of sovereign mercy, so the Christian - aware of his own frailty - will turn toward the Lord for power. It is when we are weak that we are strong (2 Corinthians 12:10) - that is to say, there must be awareness of our weakness before we will turn to the Lord for help.

A. W. Pink; *The Sovereignty of God;* p. 265

Does Christ come merely to improve our existence in Adam or to end it, sweeping us into His new creation? Is Christianity all about spiritual and moral makeovers or about death and resurrection - radical judgment and radical grace?

Michael Horton; *Christless Christianity;* p. 24

If the message the church proclaims makes sense without conversion, if it does not offend even lifelong believers from time to time so that they too need to die to themselves and live more to Christ, then it is not the gospel.

Michael Horton; *Christless Christianity;* p. 141

Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace as a doctrine, a principle, a system. Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.

Deitrich Bonhoffer; *The Cost of Discipleship;*