

## Where Do You Want To Be?

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Good morning.

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“In ... Christ Jesus”

How often do you hear that said? ... the “In” part? I say it a lot ... when talking about God’s plan of salvation ... and His many blessings.

It’s a habit. But not JUST a habit. ... It’s a habit of being careful ... with how to say things.

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Stop and think ... just how many people believe in God ... but ... refuse to believe in Jesus as His Son.

Do they think ... they can bypass Christ ... and still have God’s blessings?

Well then, how about the people who DO believe in Jesus as Christ ... yet still try to go around Him to get to the Father?

What are they missing? They are missing this! You can’t be good with the Father unless you’re good with His Son.

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Unless you’re in the right relationship with His Son ... you cannot approach God ... you cannot be acceptable to God.

Let’s hold that thought for a bit. We’ll circle back to it.

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Let’s go shopping!

For what? You say.

For blessings from God! That’s what!

What do you want from God?

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**How about love?** Yes, of course. The Love of God. Be real now! ... Who would NOT want God’s love?

OK ... how about ... God’s **grace and mercy**. You’ll definitely want a bunch of that.

**Hope.** You'll need some good solid hope. Unshakeable hope to sustain you in the valleys of life.

Hope in this life ... yes! But you're going to need more than that. You'll need **hope beyond the grave.** Hope that never fades.

**Forgiveness** of sins. Yes! You'll need a bunch of that.

**Salvation.** Yes again! You'll need that too.

Do you want to **rise from the dead** someday? You'd be crazy if you didn't want to. I don't mean ... rising up to pick up where you left off when you died. I mean to a new life without the aches and pains and worries of your previous life. That's a "yes," then?

I'd guess you'll want to be considered a **member of the Lord's church,** right? You'll need that too!

One of God's **Christian Saints?** In a scriptural sense? Yes?

I'd like to **live forever.** How about you?

Do you want God to **make you alive?** Sure beats the alternative. Dead on the inside.

Do you want to be a **child of God?** A son of God? A daughter of God?

How about **reconciliation?** Who would dare be at war with God?

You sing, "**Nearer My God to Thee.**" My guess is that drawing near to God is pretty high on your list?

**Free choice** is important to most. How about to you? The freedom to choose God over the world? To let that be your own decision? ... in the shopping cart!

Oh! This one should have been nearer the top of the list. Of course you'll want **every spiritual blessing possible.** All that God has made available to His children.

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That's quite a shopping list! You chose wisely. Sixteen awesome blessings God has made available. There's more we didn't talk about.

Now ... I'm not even going to get into ... what you're willing to pay for all these wonderful blessings.

Instead, I'm going to ask you ... where you plan to get them?

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There's a neat passage of scripture in 2 Corinthians 2.

**2 Cor 2:17** ... The Apostle Paul says that ... "we are not like many, peddling the word of God for profit. But as from sincerity ... but as from God ... we speak *in Christ* in the sight of God."

In short, Paul is warning you ... “ DO NOT to try to get bargain basement scriptural advice from fraudulent doctrine peddlers. Don’t go shopping “on the cheap” when it comes to your soul.

Go to the words of the inspired Apostles ... revealed in Christ ... in the sight of God.

Hear those two important words? “IN CHRIST”

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Let’s run down the shopping list you just made. But this time ... let’s carefully look to see where we need to go to get these blessings.

From God ... to be sure.

But not ... repeat NOT ... outside of Christ. Nor next to Him ... but IN HIM. Jesus repeatedly warned ... “No one comes to Father except THROUGH Me.”

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What do the scriptures say?

**The Love of God** ... can only be had IN Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:39)

God’s **grace and mercy** ... can only be found IN Christ Jesus. (1 Cor 1:4)

The **hope** you’re looking for... in this life ... and especially beyond the grave ... can be had only IN Christ whom God raised from the dead. (Eph 1:18-19)

**Forgiveness** of sins is found only from God IN Christ Jesus. (Eph 4:32).

**Salvation.** Again ... only IN Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:5; 2 Tim 2:10)

**Rising from the dead** ... requires that you fall asleep IN Jesus. (1 Thess 4:14-16)

**Church membership** is available only IN Christ. (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 1:2)

Considered a **Saint** by God? IN Christ. (Phil 1:1)

**Living forever.** It’s the gift of God ... only IN Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 6:23)

**Being alive** unto God. Only IN Christ will God make you alive. (1 Cor 15:22)

Become a **child of God**? ONLY IN Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:26)

**Reconciliation.** God reconciled the world to Himself IN Christ. (2 Cor 5:19)

**Near-ness** to God happens only IN Christ. (Eph 2:13)

The **Freedom to choose** your eternal destination ... is only possible IN Christ. Outside of Christ, you’ve already made the choice to perish. (Eph 2:13; Gal 2:4)

**Every Spiritual blessing** is to be found IN, and only IN, Christ Jesus The Lord. (Eph 1:3)

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Sixteen blessings from God.

All sixteen are ONLY available IN CHRIST JESUS.

It's sort of like shopping with a computer. These blessing would be "greyed out" if you were not "IN Christ."

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So ... how do we get them?

Jesus is not going to parcel these blessings out ... like a vending machine.

Don't think like that. That's a consumer attitude.

Jesus is looking for people to come into **HIM**. He's looking for people to enter into an intimate relationship with Him.

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In Christ is where we want to be. Where we need to be. IN CHRIST!

It's not a play on words. The first thing that probably comes to your mind ... is that two objects can't occupy the same space at the same time.

But we're not talking about solid objects here. If two cars tried to do this ... we'd have a crash on our hands.

But ... take ... for example ... a husband and a wife. They can ... in a sense ... be in the same space at the same time.

Their minds can be. Their memories can be. Their hearts can be. Their intentions and determination can be. Their plans and dreams can be. Their faith can be. Their love and devotion can be. And so on and so on.

They can be one with each other.

Isn't that what God intended in marriage from the beginning?

Gen 2:22-24 ... "And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.' For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

Woman was fashioned after man. God intended for man and woman to be married and become as one.

In Mat 19:6 ... Jesus reaffirmed God's intention ... "Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

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You've got to be thinking along these lines ... if you're going to understand what it means to be "In Christ."

In Eph 5:22-33 ... the Apostle Paul draws an analogy. An analogy between marriage ... and being joined to Christ's body (the church).

He speaks of the relationship between Husband and wife ... and parallels it to the relationship between Christ and His Bride (between Christ and the Church).

Consider this also ... just as woman was formed from man ... and hence were suitable to become one flesh ... we (you and me) were made in God's own image and hence are suitable to become one with Christ spiritually.

While there are many lessons to be learned in this analogy, there is one main point I want to bring to the fore-front. And that is ... Christians are to be one with Christ in much the same way as a wife and husband are to be one with each other.

This is what it means to be "In Christ." We Christians are His Bride. We are One.

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Now ... and this is the point of the lesson today ... we need to understand how to become one with Christ. How to get IN Christ.

Otherwise, we'll be standing in the cold in the Day of Judgment. Well, not likely the cold.

But we'll certainly be left out of the trip to Heaven ... when Christ delivers the Kingdom (the church) back to His Father.

1 Cor 15:24 ... "Then comes the end, when Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father ..."

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Turn with me to Galatians 3:27-29 ... read it for yourself ... with me ...

Paul writes ... not off the cuff ... but by inspiration ...

Gal 3:27-29 ... "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." ... "Have put ON Christ"

... There no longer is ... Jew or Greek ... slave or free man ... male or female ... because you are all one ... IN CHRIST JESUS ... And you belong to Christ ...",

You have put on Christ in baptism ... you are "In Him" ... so to speak. All who have done the same ... are IN CHRIST

Baptism puts a person in Christ. Not belief in Christ only ... but belief that causes you to obey the commandment to be baptized.

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I just said the “C” word ... didn’t I?” Yes ... we are commanded to be baptized.

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Jesus commissioned His twelve Apostles to Preach the Gospel to the entire known world ...

He said ... in Matt 28:18-20 ... (turn there) ...

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.”

This was not a suggestion ... it was what we call an imperative. Like when you tell a “dog sit-stay.” Or a wife tells her husband ... when they are out shopping together ... “sit-say.”

Not optional.

Jesus said to go and disciple all nations by baptizing them into (that’s the usage of the word “in”) ... into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Baptize them into the family of God ... where we become one with Christ ... where we get “IN Christ.”

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We’ve been studying in Wednesday Bible class. ... about Moses and the Children of Israel going through the Red Sea.

The Israelites were not saved from Pharaoh’s army, until they had passed all the way through the Red Sea.

Paul, in 1 Cor 10:1-2 ... (turn there) ... says that the Israelites were baptized beneath the cloud and in the sea.

They were totally buried.

He says that the Israelites were baptized into Moses. They were buried “with him.”

In that relationship ... they became eligible to partake of God’s blessings ... afforded under the Old Covenant.

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No one can argue that. It's clear.

But when it comes to the blessings of the New Covenant ... people start peddling cheap doctrine.

They try to claim these blessings ... while staying outside of Christ.

Or they try to tell you ... that all you've got to do to get "In Christ" ... is to believe that He is the Son of God ... while refusing to be buried with Him.

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Now then ... carry the image of being baptized into Moses in the Sea ... buried with Moses in the Red Sea ... into the first section of Romans chapter six ... (turn there) ...

As the chapter begins ... Paul is addressing Christians ... baptized believers ...

... who wanted to milk the grace of God like they were playing an arcade video game. "Just give me another quarter and I'll go again."

They reasoned ... that ... if God is willing to forgive sins as we repent and pray ... then why not just go on sinning here and there ... and mop up with the blood of Christ ... when we're done having fun?

That was a bit crass wasn't it? A LOT crass! That's how Paul took it.

"What shall we say then? Shall we just continue in sin ... and let God's grace increase?

"GOD FORBID" ... "MAY IT NEVER BE!"

"You DIED to sin." ... "How can you even think of continuing to sin whenever it suits you.

Rom 6:3-6 ... (turn to) ...

"Do you not know ... that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus ... have been baptized into His death?

Therefore we have been buried with Him ... through baptism ... into death ... in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father ...so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have become united with Him ... in the likeness of His death ... certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,

... our old self was crucified with Him ...

There's so many lessons here.

Yet again, I want to pull one large take-away to the fore-front.

Paul tells how Christians have put their former life ... the old man ... the old woman ... to death.

Killed the old life. Crucified it.

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Paul tells how ... after having crucified the old man ... Christians have submitted to a burial in water ... just like Christ was buried in the earth after He sacrificed his life.

Paul says that we were buried "with" Chris.

This is where we were baptized into Christ ... ..this is where we entered into a relationship with Christ ... and became entitled to the blessings of the New Covenant ... .. all sixteen things you shopped for in the beginning of this lesson ... and more.

Baptism is how ... is where ... we "get IN Christ."

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It would have been for nothing ... the blood of the Passover lamb ... the forsaking of the old life in Egypt ... the entrance into the depths of the Red Sea ... the baptism into Moses ... ..

... .. if Moses and the Israelites had not come up out of the Sea ... free from captivity ...

... it would all have been for nothing.

In the very same way ... it would have been for nothing ... the blood of Christ ... the crucifixion of our old lives ... our submission to water burial ... our baptism into Christ ....

... .. if Christ had not risen and made it possible for us to rise up from the water ... to a new life ... free from sin.

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In Col 2:12 ... Paul wrote ...

"[Your sins were done away] ...having been buried with Christ baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

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We were dead in our sins ... until we were baptized into Christ

God made us alive In Christ ... forgiving us all our transgressions,"

IN Christ. ... That's where everyone on the face of the earth needs to be ... must be ...

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Invitation of Christ ... to be buried with Him in baptism.



“Come unto Me ... come Into Me”

Where do YOU want to be?

When Jesus Comes for God’s children?

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