

You Are In Christ
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We've been talking about Christ's suffering, resurrection, and glory. And Jesus Christ is central to your life, more important to you than you could ever imagine. Here are some verses about Christ:
- Eph. 2:20 – "...having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone..." Col. 1:17 – "Christ is before all things and in Him all things hold together." Phil. 1:21 – "To live is Christ."
- So Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone; He physically and spiritually holds all things together; and He's your life, and without Him, you have no spiritual life, your life is worthless and empty. And to be a secure, successful Christian, to have a close relationship with God, to have real love and joy, to truly grow, you need to know who Christ is and what He did for you.

Now that last vs., "To live is Christ", isn't just referring to this life but your life forever and ever, to your eternal life. And Jesus Christ is the key, the only way that you can live the Christian life and be and do all that God wants. Now the primary focus of the New Testament is Jesus Christ, but the epistles explain more what Christ did for you, specifically as it relates to being sanctified.

Now I want to read some vss. that tell us what Christ did for us. Col. 2:11 - "*In Christ you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*" Rom. 6:6 - "*Our old self was crucified with Him that our body of sin might be done away with.*" Gal. 2:20 - "*I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.*" 2 Cor. 5:17 - "*If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold new things have come.*"

Now these two phrases, the "body of flesh" and the "old self", are both referring to your sinful fallen nature, a nature that completely controlled your life before you were saved. You sinned because you had this sinful nature, and you couldn't do anything but sin. But we read that your "old self" was crucified, was killed, and your "body of flesh" was circumcised, and so your sinful nature is gone, and no longer operable in you.

Rom. 6:3-4. In a way you can't fully understand, you shared in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. This is a great work of Christ, a divine miracle, a work that was applied to your life by the Holy Spirit at the moment you were saved, were born again. And so your "old self" was crucified, your "body of flesh" was done away with, and you were given a new life, a new spiritual life, and so you're a new creature in Christ. Out with the old and in with the new. And so you're not an unbeliever, you're a believer; you're not a sinner, you're a saint; you're not a child of the devil, you're a child of God.

And now you can share, you can participate in the life of Christ. You shared in Christ's death and now you can share in His life. 2 Pet. 1. You can have life through Christ and you can live for Christ. You can live as a child of God and not as a child of the devil.
- Eph. 2:4. This says you are alive with Christ, and some translations say alive in Christ. And so you are not spiritually dead, you are spiritually alive. 2 Cor. 5:17, 2 Cor. 5:7

But then you say, "*if my 'old self' was crucified, why do I still sin?*" Rom. 7:14-25. Some people say these vss. are describing Paul as an unbeliever, but that's not true. Unbelievers don't talk like this, they don't have this struggle with sin, they just sin. So Paul is talking as one who's saved. And he admits that he still sins, but he doesn't want to sin - Paul is doing what he does not want to do. And so how does he explain this? He says that he is of flesh, he says that it's the sin that dwells in him. And so what does this mean? Well, the fact that he says he is of flesh, that sin still dwells in him, doesn't mean that the "*old self*" wasn't crucified, that the "*body of flesh*" wasn't circumcised.

What Paul is saying is that he has a new inner spirit, but this new spirit resides, lives in this unredeemed humanness, which still has certain weaknesses and desires to sin. Paul is not saying he is in the flesh, but that the flesh is still in him, that he is of the flesh. Your new birth in Christ indeed brings death to the sinful old self but it does not bring death to the temporal flesh, and its desires to still sin. You get saved and you receive this new divine nature, but you don't experience all aspects of this divine nature until you're glorified - that's when you're fully saved.

Rom. 7:17 - Paul is saying that he, that is, his new inner spirit, is not sinning, but that this sin, this unredeemed humanness is sinning. This doesn't mean you can just go sin, that you can do what you want and excuse yourself. You're to live a holy life, you're to live like a child of God, for that's who you are. The fact that you're a new creature, and that God has given you the Holy Spirit, means you can live like a child of God. M. L. Jones said, "*Do not go on living as if you were still that old man, because the old man has died. Do not go on living as if he was still alive.*"

Now when we talk about sin and sinning, we realize there are three kinds of people:
- 1st, there's the person who's not saved and he always sins, and he can't help but sin; and if he doesn't get saved, then he sins on earth and then dies and goes to hell and keeps on sinning.
- 2nd, there's the Christian, there's you, and you were a sinner and you sinned. But then you got saved, and you became a new creature in Christ. And you're living a holy life, but you still sin, but not all the time. And you have the same kind of struggle that Paul talked about.
- 3rd, there's the Christian who is in heaven. And you will be in heaven someday, and you will be glorified, you'll be perfect, and you never sin, and you never will sin. You will live perfectly, gloriously, and in just the way God planned for you to live.

But for us as Christians, we are in this 2nd category. And sometimes we do what is right, and sometimes we do what is wrong. And as you know, living the Christian life isn't easy. It is a struggle, which is what Paul said in Rom. 7. And Gal. 5:16 says the same thing – *“The flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are in opposition to one another so you may not do the things that you please.”*

But what does Romans 7:24 say? *“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* God the Father, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, sets you free, gives you the victory over sin.

- Col. 3:5-13. And so positionally, you're a new creature in Christ, but practically you're to live out your new life day by day. Every day you're to say no to sin, and yes to God, and God will give you the victory. Eph. 4:22-24, Ps. 23:6

And so your old self was spiritually circumcised, was crucified with Christ. And you were given a new self, a new nature, and you're a new creature in Christ. 2 Cor. 5:17

- Romans 8:9-14. These are important vss. about living the Christian life. You can say no to sin, to the deeds of the flesh, and yes to God, to righteousness, to living the life that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit want you to live.

- Eph. 2:4-6. And so you're not spiritually dead, but spiritually alive with Christ, and you're a child of God, and a citizen of heaven.

Let's look at another major point about you and Christ. Eph. 1:9-10. Jesus Christ is God, and He is the Lord, the King, the Ruler, and all things will be summed up in Him, and we'll see this in the coming Kingdom Age when Christ is ruling over the earth.

- Eph. 1:3. This says you are in Christ. This is an amazing, encouraging, and relevant truth that you're in Christ. Now of course this doesn't mean you're in Christ physically speaking, but spiritually speaking. But what does it mean for you to be in Christ?

Col. 1:2. This tells us the physical location of these believers - they live in Colossae. But what's their spiritual location? They are in Christ. Each of you are always aware of your physical location - you are in Florida, you are in a church building right now, or you are in your home, or in your car driving somewhere, or in a store.

- But what's most important? Your physical location or your spiritual location? Of course, it's your spiritual location. Now your physical location will change, but your spiritual location, the fact that you're in Christ, always, always stays the same. So wherever you're at physically, always remember where you're at spiritually, you are in Christ.

But what else can we say about being in Christ?

1. It means you're safe and secure. If you're in a house during a storm, you feel safe. If you're in a tank during a war, you feel safe, you feel protected. And so too, being in Christ means you're safe, secure, and protected.

2. Being in Christ means you can't get away from Christ - you can't leave Christ, you can't escape from Him, He won't let you go, and so you're securely in Christ. Jn. 10:28-29

3. Being in Christ means you have all these blessings - redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, eternal life, etc. Eph. 1:4, 7

4. Being in Christ means, spiritually speaking, you have all you need - grace, peace, strength, fellowship, love, joy, etc.

- Eph. 1:1-2, 3:12. I think of how a fetus is in her mother, and the mother provides all the nutrients necessary for this little fetus to grow and become strong and then be born. This little fetus feeds off her mother, and so too you're to feed off Christ. Only by Christ can you spiritually grow and become all that God wants you to be.

5. Being in Christ means you're close to Christ, and He's close to you. If you're in a house with someone, then you're close to them physically speaking, and hopefully relationally too. And being in Christ means you're close to Him, He's spiritually near you. Ps. 119:151. And being close to Christ is through the work of the Spirit. Jn. 14:16-20. And so because you're in Christ, you can have a relationship with Him, a close relationship with Him.

6. Being in Christ means you have purpose. Jesus Christ has a purpose and because you're in Christ, you have the same purpose He has - to love people, to tell people the gospel of Christ, to tell people the truths of God, to encourage people, etc.
- Rom. 6 says you were baptized into Christ. 1 Cor. 12:13 says you were baptized into the body of Christ, and the body of Christ is another name for the church. And so you have a relationship with Christ, and a relationship with the church, and as a member of the church, you're to do the work of the church which is the work of Christ.

7. Being in Christ means you have a future, you have hope. There's life after death, there's heaven, and a glorified body, and most importantly, being with Christ Himself.

John 15:4-11. As a Christian, you are in Christ, but now you are to live that out.

And that means spiritually abiding in Christ, abiding in His love, depending on Him, learning from His word, and carrying out His work. And as you abide in Christ and in His word and in His love, then you will grow and bear fruit and be a glory to God.

- Indeed, God wants you to know about your relationship with Christ, that you've been crucified with Christ, and now you're in Christ, and can have a close relationship with Him.

- John 14:18-20