

Christ is In You
Steve Hogan – April 23, 2023
Hope Bible Church of Tampa
ChristisKingdom.org

We're taking a couple weeks to talk about your relationship with Christ. The gospels and epistles have much to say about this, what it means to be saved by Christ, your new life in Christ, and what it means to live for Christ. Last time we talked about your old self being crucified, your body of flesh being circumcised by Christ, and that you were given a new nature." 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 you can share, you can participate in the life of Christ. You have divine 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.

And yes, your new self still lives in what is called this unredeemed humanness, which has these desires, these tendencies to sin. So you're still tempted to sin, and you still do sin. Gal. 5:17 says, *"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."* So your new birth in Christ brings death to the sinful old self but it does not bring death to the temporal flesh, and its desires to still sin.

We also talked about how you're in Christ. And this describes your spiritual location, that you're always in Christ. This is an amazing truth, for it means you're spiritually safe and secure, you're protected, you can have this close relationship with Christ, you have a purpose, you have all these blessings, and you have all you need to live for Christ. Eph. 1:3, 7

But there's much more to say about your relationship with Christ. Jn. 14:17-20. Jesus was going back to heaven to be with His Father, and He wanted to enable His disciples to continue His work without Him physically being here, and He did that by giving them the Holy Spirit. And Jesus is saying that He'd be with them through the life and work of the Spirit. John 14:20. And there are two key phrases that describe what this means. And the first is *"you in Me,"* which is what we just talked about, that as a Christian, you are in Christ.

The second is *"I in you,"* which means Christ is in you. And we just saw in vs. 17 that the Holy Spirit is in you, and so Jesus Christ lives His life in you through the Holy Spirit. This is a powerful truth, that Christ is not just with you, but in you. Col. 1:27 says, *"the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you."* And this word mystery means that this didn't happen in the OT times, but it's now true during this church age.

Gal 2:20 - *"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me, and the life which I now live is by faith in Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."* This says, *"Christ who lives in me."* And so Christ lives in you, and it's by the power of the Spirit. And the life you now live is by faith in Christ, by trusting Him, by believing that He'll live His life in and through you by the Spirit.

And you should want to live a Christ-like life - to think and say and do what Christ wants you to think and say and do. The life you live is not about you, but about Christ and His life. Phil. 1:21 says, *"To live is Christ."* To live isn't fun, food, sports, pleasure, relationships, or work. To live is Christ living in and through you. And it's not by how you feel, but by faith, by submitting to Christ, and living in the way He wants you to live no matter how you feel.

Eph. 3:16-17 says, *"that the Father would grant you ... to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you being rooted and grounded in love."* This tells you the same thing, that Christ lives in you, and it's by the power of the Spirit. You must see that you can't live your life by yourself, by your own wisdom or power, but only by the wisdom, power, and leading of the Spirit. Rom. 8:9-15

It says Christ lives in you by faith. As a Christian, you're not usually going to feel Christ living in you. As a Christian, you have feelings but feelings shouldn't be the reason you do what you do, should not be that which leads or drives your life. Gal. 5:16, 18, 25. You're to live your life by God's Spirit, by His word. You're to walk by faith and not by sight, and that happens as you know and believe and mediate on God's word. Psalm 1:2, Matt. 4:4

Eph. 3:17 says Christ is to dwell in your heart. Christ is to be living in your heart, your spirit. And your heart, your spirit is your innermost being, and it affects every part of your life – your soul, your motivations, your thoughts, your words, and your actions. So you see the importance of Christ living in you, for it affects everything you say or do.

And we read about being grounded in love. And this is essential that you're rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, that you know the love that Christ has for you. Eph. 5:1-2 If you don't know and believe Christ's love for you, then you can't live like God wants you to live - you'll be spiritually empty and dry, and not be motivated and excited to live for Christ. And Christ lives in you so He can show you His love, so you can know and experience His love, and so His love can then be passed on to others. Eph. 3:17-19, 1 Jn. 4:7-21. Christ lives in you so you can live like Christ, talk like Christ, and do Christ's work. 2 Cor. 5:14-20

Let's talk about knowing God and Christ, and having this relationship with Him. We know the importance of having good relationships with people, but what's most important is your knowledge of God and Christ, of having a good, close relationship with Them.

- John 17:3 - *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."* John 3:16. We talk a lot about what it means to be a Christian, but what we're fundamentally saying is that it means you have eternal life, this relationship with God and Jesus Christ. And this is what's most important. Lk. 10:38-42

Col. 2:1-3, Eph. 1:15-17. In both these passages, Paul is praying for the believers that they have this knowledge of God, this relationship with God. And that's because it's most important for our lives. Phil. 3:8-10a tells us this too when it says, "*the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...*" It's worth it, it's a valuable thing to know Christ. What's most important is not money, a good job, friends, being healthy, or being intelligent – what's much more important than anything else is knowing Christ, having this good, this close relationship with Him.

Eph. 4:11-13. There are many principles here that relate to our to our relationship with Christ. So far we've talked about our relationship with Christ as individuals, and this is true, that each of you need to know Christ in a personal way, like we saw with Jesus and Mary, or with Jesus and Paul. Remember when Paul said, "*I want to know Christ.*" But we're talking about the church, and how as a church, as the body of Christ, we need to know Christ. Knowing Jesus Christ is personal, but it's also as a spiritual family.

And so what do these verses tell us?

1. Gifted members of the church are to help you grow in your knowledge of the Son of God. And pastors and teachers are to help believers get to know Christ and grow in their relationship with Him. They're to teach about Christ, talk about Christ, and be examples of ones who know and love Christ. Paul was a great example of this. "*To live is Christ.*"

2. We are to attain to the unity of the faith. God wants us to be united, and a key component of unity is that we all know Christ, and that together we're growing in our knowledge of Christ. And this happens when we talk about Christ with one another, when we share what we know about Christ, when we're examples of ones who know Christ, and when we're together knowing and experiencing the love of Christ. Eph. 3:18-21

3. We read about equipping the saints for the work of service. It's important to see that knowing Christ and having this relationship with Him is not separate from everything else in your life, it does not stand all by itself. If you know Christ, you'll love Christ, and if you love Christ, you'll serve Christ, you'll do the work of Christ. And if you don't know Christ, then you won't do the work of Christ. That is, you need to know Christ, to have this relationship with Christ if you're to really serve Him. Knowing Christ and His love motivates you to serve Him, to obey Him.

And so knowing Christ and having this relationship with Him is the key to the growth of the church, the unity of the church, the body of Christ being built up, and doing the work of Christ and fulfilling His purposes. And so a mature Christian and a mature church is founded on, is based on knowing Jesus Christ. Luke 10:42. As you serve Christ, as you do the work of Christ, then you'll grow in your knowledge of Christ, your relationship with Christ, for He will reveal Himself to you. John 14:21, 23

But what specifically does it mean to know Christ? It means you know who He is.

- It means knowing He's your Savior, that He saved you from all your sins.
 - It means knowing He's your Lord, your Master, that He is to direct your life.
 - It means knowing He is your Creator, that He Himself made you.
 - It means knowing He is your Judge, not meaning He will judge you for your sins, but that He'll judge you for how you live your life, and reward you when you live for Him.
- And knowing who Christ is affects your relationship with Him. For example, it results in you fearing Him, and being thankful, and being humble, and in loving Him, and in trusting Him. Employer, employee. Acts 9:31

But knowing Christ also means you know what He's like, you know His character. We've already said that it means He loves you, but what else does it mean?

- Matthew 11:28 says that He is gentle towards you and humble in heart. This means He is approachable, He wants you to talk to Him, to be open with Him.
- Col. 3:12-13 says that He is compassionate, kind, patient and forgiving towards you.
- Phil. 2:1 says that He is encouraging, consoling, and affectionate towards you.
- Luke 4:34 says that He is holy, and Jer. 9 says He is just and righteous.
- Rev. 7:12 says that He is wise, powerful, glorious, and eternal.
- There are more aspects of His character. But the point is that Jesus is your Lord, and He's perfect for you, and you need to get to know Him, to experience these aspects of His character in your life.

There is one more thing, you need to know Christ's purpose. And His purpose is to build the church, and to share the gospel, and to make disciples of all the nations. Or we could simply say that it's to love people. John 15:12, 17

- And we'll not go through all these, but the point is that as a Christian, this is your purpose too, and in the context of the church, you're to do your part.
- And God has given you at least one spiritual gift if not more as one major way that you can do your part to build the church. Romans 12:1-8; 2 Pet 1:2, 3:18