

“In Christ” Minded – Part 1 & 2

2 Timothy 1:1, **“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.”**

2 Timothy 1:9-10, **“Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”**

In the above verses of scripture we find the Lord being referred to as both **Jesus Christ** and **Christ Jesus**. But what is the difference between these two different forms of address? Firstly, in the gospels there is never any reference to the Lord as Christ Jesus, you will only find Him being addressed as Jesus Christ. Also, when Christ Jesus does appear in the Epistles, it is almost entirely preceded by the word “in” (“**in Christ Jesus**”). I thought and prayed about this and believe the answer can be found in our foundational scriptures (2 Timothy 1:1 and 2 Timothy 1:9-10).

“... **Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ** (temporal truth – ‘relating to worldly affairs’) **by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus** (positional truth – ‘relating to spiritual actuality’). Look at the other verse in 2 Timothy... **“Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began (‘positional truth’ as this is a spiritual actuality or reality), but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ (‘temporal truth’ – as this is relating to the Lord’s ministry here on earth).”**

Another way of seeing this is by examining the true meaning of both phrases. **Christ Jesus** is literally “the anointed Jesus”, and **Jesus Christ** is literally “Jesus the anointed”. I would argue that “Christ Jesus” is who **He is** (the anointed One – *positional truth*), and “Jesus Christ” is His title (Jesus the anointed – *temporal truth*).

So why is it important that we understand the difference? Because “positional truth” is who we are IN HIM. This is an actuality – a reality! And it’s incredible how your life changes when you ‘walk’ in this truth. Who you are IN CHRIST JESUS is already established (an actual fact), and therefore, you need not strive to attain it. If you want to know who you really are, and what you have already attained, look no further than the scriptures that contain these three words – **“in Christ Jesus.”**

There is a book that was published in 1898, written by Arthur Tappan Pierson, called **“In Christ Jesus - The Sphere of the Believer’s Life.”** It is now in the public domain so we can provide a link for you to download it from the Internet. I sincerely recommend you read it. Most of the information I am using is from this book, and it’s intended to show you, by a few examples, the boundless range and scope of the two or three words: **in Christ**, or, **in Christ Jesus**. This very small key may open a very large door, and that door may itself lead into a vast building with priceless stores of wealth and beauty. This brief phrase is a significant key to the whole New Testament. **“In Christ Jesus”** may be the most important words ever written to express the mutual relationship between the believer and Christ.

To start with, we should understand what this phrase, **in Christ**, or **in Christ Jesus**, means. If there be one truth that is fundamental, and underlies all else, it is this: **“A new life in Christ Jesus.”** The Lord Himself, clearly expressed it in John 15:4: **“Abide in Me and I in you.”** This truth finds expression in many ways in the Bible, but most often in that short and simple phrase we are now studying - **“in Christ Jesus.”**

This phrase suggests that Christ is to us the 'sphere' of this **new life**. Observe - a 'sphere' rather than a circle. A circle surrounds you, but only on one plane; but a 'sphere' encompasses, envelops you, surrounding you in every direction and on every plane. If you were to draw a circle on the floor, and step within its circumference, you are within it only on the level of the floor. But, if that circle could become a sphere, and you are within it – it would on every side surround you, above and below, before and behind, on the right and on the left. What's more, the 'sphere' that surrounds you also separates and protects you from whatever is outside of it.

Note, Christ is there presented throughout the New Testament as the "sphere" of the believer's whole life and being, and in this **truth** are included these conditions: First, *Christ Jesus surrounds or embraces you, in His own life*; second, *He separates you in Himself from all hostile influences*; third, *He protects you in Himself from all perils and foes of life*; fourth, *He provides and supplies in Himself all your need*.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate all of the above.

(1) The Book of Romans

At the very opening of this letter, we read these words: **"By whom we have received grace"** (i.e., through God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord); and, in Romans 3:24, **"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."** Here then we have the key to the Epistle to the Romans: Grace, justification, and redemption, in and through Christ Jesus – or, to put it briefly, Justified in Christ.

We can have, *in Christ Jesus*, nothing else, unless and until we have first **justification** -- a new standing before God. Note, the first unfolding of God's grace in the epistles is the revelation that sinners become saints. The question, "How do the condemned become 'justified'; the lost 'saved' and the alienated 'reconciled'?" This is the question first and fully answered in this epistle. It is plain that to be in Christ justified is far more than a pardon or even reconciliation; it includes being counted as *just*, and put upon the same standing as Christ (before God the Father).

Summary: **In Christ Justified** – Christ the sphere of justification, reconciliation, eternal life, peace with God and safekeeping.

(1) The Books to the Corinthians

In 1 Corinthians 1:2, we first meet the phrase which we seek: *"sanctified in Christ Jesus."* **"I Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, to the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."**

This proves upon examination to furnish us with the "key note" of both of these epistles. This thought is further amplified in the verse 13 of the same chapter, where, we find Christ made, **"unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."** But, in both letters to the Corinthians, sanctification in Christ is as prominent as justification in Christ. We might compare the two books like this:

Romans: Justified in Christ Jesus by His blood.

Corinthians: Sanctified in Christ Jesus by His Spirit.

In Corinthians 1 and 2, the golden thread of connection is our union with Christ by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. We therefore reach the second stage of our journey through these paths of God's truth. And we here find Jesus Christ our Lord presented as the sphere of the believer's **holy living** – sanctification as well as justification. Here, revealed to us is an “inbreathing” of the very Spirit and life of God, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature.

Summary: **In Christ Sanctified** – Christ the sphere of sanctification, holy in Christ, a new creation in Christ, partaking of the divine nature and the new atmosphere of the believer's life.

(1) The Book of Galatians

We find the phrase **in Christ** or its equivalent, “*with Christ*”, a lot in this epistle. ***“But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me”*** (Galatians 2:15-20).

Notice, every variety of expression is found here, such as “*by the faith of Christ*,” “*crucified with Christ*” (Galatians 2:20), but the most striking words which catch the eye are these: ***“I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”*** Here is the key to the letter to the Galatians: “*In Christ Crucified, yet living unto God.*” As a believer I am in Christ, and therefore I am dead to the law and to its penalty; I am in Christ, and therefore **alive** unto God, and dead to the world.

There are 3 aspects of our crucifixion - in a sense a 3-fold crucifixion:

- + He dies to the world with its fascination and domination.
- + He dies to the flesh with its affections and lusts.
- + He dies to himself that Christ may live in him.

Give your heart wholly to the dominion of grace and faith. Faith makes you conscious and confident of your heavenly citizenship. All these lessons are summed up in that one verse: ***“That, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life ”*** (Romans 6:4).

Summary: **In Christ Crucified** – Christ the sphere of self-renunciation, walking in the Spirit with new life and liberty and sowing to the Spirit.

(1) The Book of Ephesians

The very first verse contains the expression, “*faithful in Christ Jesus*,” and the third verse furnishes the key to this epistle in one short sentence: ***“Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”*** This letter to the Ephesians lifts us to the very summit. We find here at least ten separate uses or combinations of the words **in Christ** or **in Him**, as applied to the present state of the believer, and as exhibiting His possible heavenly life (even while on earth).

“And made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). The peculiar truth introduced to our view in this epistle is, therefore, the heavenly nature and divine fullness of this sphere of the new life. When by faith we

enter into Christ, the life we are introduced into is not earthly, but essentially heavenly. It is not to be confounded with joys and privileges, which are of this world, however good and lawful. **In Christ** we are lifted above that level to a divine communion.

Christ Jesus is essentially "a heavenly sphere of life". In Him we are already exalted to the heavenly places. Among these heavenly powers and privileges we may find include:

1. A heavenly knowledge of divine mysteries
2. A heavenly life or divine quickening
3. A heavenly union with Christ and His saints
4. A heavenly fellowship with angels
5. A heavenly foretaste of bliss
6. A heavenly access with boldness to God
7. A heavenly frame, renewed in love
8. A heavenly walk or conduct
9. A heavenly growth to the fulness of stature
10. A heavenly strength and power to overcome
11. A heavenly assurance or sealing of the Spirit
12. A heavenly security within the fulness of God

Summary: **In Christ Ascended** - Exalted to the heavenly sphere of privilege and blessing, one with God and with all the saints and filled with the Spirit.

(1) The Book of Philippians

Observe how the opening verse salutes all the saints in Christ Jesus, therefore bringing to our view this remarkable phrase in the very salutation of the inspired writer - the inscription on the letter. Immediately after, in the eleventh verse, we have the characteristic sentence, which again, as a key, unlocks the doors of this epistle: **"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God"** (Philippians 1:11).

This suggests as a ruling thought that **in Christ** we are full of all the fruits of such "abiding", and that no circumstances can destroy our fruitfulness. And, among other fruits, our peace, and rest, and joy in God. This is the divine idea, which we meet at every turn. Yes, it was Paul who sang and prayed in that inner jail and is the very man who's a prisoner in Rome singing, **"Rejoice in the Lord, always! And again I say, Rejoice!"** (Chapter 4:4). If this letter has any special keynote which is the controlling thought, in all these melodies of a holy heart, it is this: in Christ Jesus satisfied.

This epistle especially unfolds to us, and emphasises for us, that great truth that in Christ Jesus we have a sphere of **perfect peace**. **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"** (Philippians 4:6-7).

Even science and atheistic worldly wisdom says: **"Be anxious about nothing."** Modern science has brought to light the fact that worry will kill, and determines, from recent discoveries, how worry kills. Scores of deaths, set down to other causes, are due to worry alone. Anxiety and care, the fretting of habitual worry, injure beyond repair certain cells of the brain, which being the nutritive centre of the body, other organs become gradually injured; and when some disease of

these organs, or ailments arise, death finally ensues. Insidiously, worry creeps upon the brain in the form of a single, constant, never-lost idea.

Just as the dropping of water over a period of years will wear a groove in a stone, so worry, gradually destroys the brain cells that are, so to speak, the commanding officers of mental power, health, and motion. Do not worry. Do not hurry. *"Let your moderation be known to all men."* Take in the fresh air day and night. Sleep and rest abundantly. Sleep is nature's benediction. Spend less nervous energy each day than you make. Be cheerful. *"A light heart lives long."* Think only healthy thoughts. *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he"* (Proverbs 23:7). *"Seek peace and pursue it"* (Psalm 34:14). Associate with healthy people. Health is contagious as well as disease. Don't carry the whole world on your shoulders, far less the universe. *"Trust in God and do the right."* Never despair. *"Lost hope is a fatal disease."*

Summary: **In Christ Satisfied** - Christ the sphere of perfect compensation and supreme satisfaction, joy in the Lord, strength for all duties and perfect peace in all circumstances.

(1) The Book of Colossians

In Colossians again we meet the phrase, **in Christ Jesus**, in the very salutation. ***"Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints"*** (Colossians 1:4). And in the prayer that immediately follows, ***"that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and Spiritual understanding"*** (Colossians 1:9).

The substance of the teaching of Colossians is this: In Christ Jesus we have the fullness of God. This idea is woven into the structure of the epistle and curiously into its language. The idea is that all this divine "fullness" dwells in Him, and may dwell in us by our dwelling in Him. This introduces us to the power and perfection of Christ, as the sphere of our new life: in Him complete. Here, as in Ephesians, there are ten blessings that are already ours, and it's interesting to compare them:

EPHESIANS	COLOSSIANS
chosen	rooted
predestinated	built up
accepted	established
redeemed	filled full
forgiven	circumcised
quickened	buried
raised	quickened
seated	risen
sealed	seated
obtained inheritance	hid

In Ephesians and Colossians, Christ is the representative of the believer in His whole human and heavenly experience. He stands in our place, and every believer may see his own regeneration, separation unto God, confession of faith, conquest over satan, satisfaction of legal penalty, life in the Spirit, exaltation to heavenly privilege, and inheritance of final glory.

Summary: **In Christ Complete** – In Christ the sphere of the fullness of God, our life now hidden in Him and seated at the right hand of God in Him.

(1) The Books to the Thessalonians

The keynote of both of these letters is promptly struck in the third verse of the first chapter, in the phrase, "*patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*". **Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father**" (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Here we are turned toward the future, the second coming of Him in whom we find the sphere of our final triumph over all foes. Hope looks forward to the future and fixes its gaze on this consummation, and hence becomes the profound secret of patience in present trials.

These two epistles therefore carry us to the climax of the glorious truth which has lifted us to higher and higher elevations, as we have gone from summit to summit in studying this progress of doctrine; here the Holy Spirit gives us a glimpse of our final, ultimate, and complete victory in Christ over all enemies and all trials.

Let us remember that the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is the consummation of all things, which pertain to our redemption. There is much that cannot be revealed to the Church, and God waits for the ages to come to make known His manifold wisdom and grace. He finds in our present time no reason to convey any fit knowledge – no dialect sufficiently meaningful to express the inexpressible things which must wait for the revelation of this experience.

The more devoutly we study the Word, the more we shall discover that, like our Lord's first advent, the present revelation of grace is a necessary hiding of God's true power; because when He comes again He will not come in disguise, but in proper attire and with proper attendance. He will be revealed as never before. And all spiritual truth and fact (pertaining to the believer), awaits this great manifestation, when His glory shall emerge out of clouds into fullness of revelation. But we must see in order to know, and for that vision we must wait, with longing and expectant eyes, until the dazzling splendour of the coming King shall declare what no words can reveal or unveil.

Summary: **In Christ Glorified** – Christ the sphere of victory of all foes, victory over death, being gathered together unto Him and glorification when He comes.

CONCLUSION

As we review this sevenfold group of letters to the early Christian disciples, we find first, a very remarkable "completeness of presentation" of our great privileges as believers. We are **in Christ Jesus**. "In Him", we find a new sphere of life with sevenfold blessing.

- First, **justification** with its new standing and acceptance before God.
- Second, **sanctification** with its new power for holy living in the Spirit of God.
- Third, fellowship with God in the actual practical walk in **newness of life**.
- Fourth, exaltation to the heavenly places in an earnest or foretaste of a **heavenly life**.

- Fifth, **compensation** for all present self-denials and sufferings and renunciations for Christ's sake.
- Sixth, **identification with Christ** in His present hidden life at the right hand of the Father.
- Seventh, **glorification** when He comes to be admired and adored by all His waiting body – the members, whose manifestation awaits His second coming.

To this nothing could be added. All that subsequent epistles can do is to amplify what is here already suggested.