

"Our Position IN CHRIST"

Ephesians 1:1

Introduction: Today we return to our study of the letter to the Ephesians. Last week we looked at an introduction which was very beneficial in helping us to understand this letter. This letter was written after there was a great revival among Gentiles and many of them came to Jesus Christ.

Acts 17:1-4

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

² And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

³ Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

⁴ And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

The church at Ephesus was made up of over 90% Gentiles. So, as Paul writes this letter, he needs to figure out how to ground the Gentiles and give them spiritual stability. When he taught the Jews, he could take them back to the Old Testament because they were knowledgeable in the Old Testament. But the Gentiles did not have that knowledge. So, Paul is going to take them way back to Eternity Past to teach them concerning God's Eternal Purpose.

Ephesians 1:4, 11

⁴ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Ephesians 3:9-11

⁹ And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

So, in chapters 1-3 he is going to instruct them in Doctrine so as to ground them.

Ephesians 4:14

¹⁴ That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

The letter can be divided into two sections. Chapters 1-3 focus upon Doctrine and chapters 4-6 focus upon living out that Doctrine in our lives. Chapters 1-3 deal with the POSITION of the believer and chapters 4-6 deal with the PRACTICE of the believer.

The city of Ephesus had a population of about 300,000 people and the main attraction in the city was the Temple of the goddess Diana. Diana was known as a fertility goddess and drew people from all over the world. The making and selling of images of the goddess Diana and metal trinkets of the temple was a major business in the city.

I. The Greeting Part 2

Notice Ephesians 1:1

Last week we started to look at the titles which Paul gives here to the believers at Ephesus.

1. **They were Saints.** - This speaks of the believer's standing before God. We have been justified and our sins are removed from our account and the righteousness of God has been imputed to our account. So as God sees us in His righteousness, He sees us as Saints. Sainthood is not something we work for. It is the result of the finished work of Jesus Christ and our faith in Him.
2. **They were the Faithful.** - Ephesus was a spiritually polluted city with the Temple of Diana located there. As believers these Saints were not perfect in Practice, but they were different. When they were saved God put within them a new heart and His Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

This Truth now applied to the believers at Ephesus and so they were different. Their lives had been changed by the power of the Gospel and their lives were characterized by faithfulness.

Application:

This is also true of those of us who know Jesus Christ today. God has given us the heart of Jesus and He has placed within us His Spirit. So, one of the distinct characteristics of our lives should be faithfulness. Notice the Ezekiel says that God will cause us to walk in His statutes and keep His judgments.

1 John 2:

³ *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

⁴ *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

⁵ *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

⁶ *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

This now brings us to where we stopped last week.

3. They were IN CHRIST

Notice Ephesians 1:1 again.

The statement "IN CHRIST" is so important. It, or its equivalent is found eleven times in this first chapter of Ephesians. In Paul's writings it is found somewhere around 164 times.

I want to take some time this morning and show you how important this Truth is when we are told we are "IN CHRIST". This is everything for the believer.

Let me just start by saying that there are only two kinds of people in the world. Those who are in Christ and those who are in Adam.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

²¹ *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

²² **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.**

Before a person is saved, they are IN ADAM and IN ADAM they are in their sins. But when they come to Jesus Christ and accept Him as their Savior God then takes them out of Adam and places them in Christ.

Romans 6:3

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

1 Corinthians 12:13

¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

So, we can see that there are only two groups of people in the world. Those who are IN ADAM and those who are IN CHRIST. Those who die IN ADAM perish and those who sleep IN CHRIST will spend eternity in heaven. Let me show you some of the blessings of being IN CHRIST.

A. In Christ we are complete.

Colossians 2:3, 8-10

³ In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

⁸ Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

⁹ For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

¹⁰ And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

One person explains this statement like this:

"As a result of the Fall, man is in a sad state of incompleteness. He is spiritually incomplete because He is totally out of fellowship with God. He is morally incomplete because he lives outside of God's will. He is mentally incomplete because he does not know ultimate truth. At salvation, believers become "partakers of the divine nature" and are made complete. Believers are spiritually complete because they have fellowship with God. They are morally complete in that they recognize the authority of God's will. They are mentally complete because they know the truth about ultimate reality."

Listen to the words of J. Vernon McGee:

"You "are complete in him." "Complete" is a nautical term, and it could be translated in this very vivid way: You are ready for the voyage of life in Him. Isn't that a wonderful way of saying it? You are ready for the voyage of life in Christ, and whatever you need for the voyage of life you will find in Him. This is where we say that Christ is the answer. What is your question? What is it you need today? Are you carried away by human philosophy?"

Then turn to Christ. Are you carried away by enticing words? Are you carried away by the systems and traditions of men? Turn to Christ."

This certainly connects with another verse here in Ephesians 1.

Notice Ephesians 1:3

We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings IN CHRIST and therefore we can say that we are thoroughly equipped for the journey of this new life IN CHRIST. We are complete so there is nothing which we lack.

B. In Christ we are accepted.

Ephesians 1:6

⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

This is such a wonderful Truth. Now that we are IN CHRIST we are accepted by God. Our acceptance is based upon what Jesus Christ did for us.

Many people are spending their time and their energy trying to live in a way that pleases God so that they will one day be accepted by Him. I can tell you that there is only ONE WAY in which God will accept you and that is by being IN CHRIST. You will never earn the acceptance of God by your works.

Isaiah 64:6

⁶ But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

There are many who live under the Law doing the best they can to keep the Law so that they will be accepted by God.

Romans 3:19-20

¹⁹ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

We are not accepted by keeping any part of the Law. Some attempt to keep the Sabbath hoping that will make them acceptable to God but they are wrong. If someone is going to live under the Law, then they need to know that keeping just one part will not save them.

James 2:10

¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Not one person will be saved by keeping the Law for we are all guilty of breaking the Law. The Law was not given to save us it was given to condemn and convict us. To show us our need of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 2:16

¹⁶ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Galatians 3:24-27

²⁴ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

²⁵ But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

²⁶ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

C. In Christ we produce spiritual fruit.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are created to bring forth good works unto God. We are not saved by these good works, but these good works are the result of our salvation. They are the result of us being IN CHRIST.

John 15:1-5

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

² Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

³ Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

We are the branches and branches do not produce fruit but they do bear fruit. Fruit is only produced by the sap that flows from the vine through the branches.

Jesus Christ is the Vine we are IN HIM as the branches and the sap is the Holy Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit that produces the fruit through our lives.

Romans 8:4

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The works of righteousness is not fulfilled BY US, but it is fulfilled IN US by the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Conclusion:

If you are saved, then you are IN CHRIST. IN HIM we are COMPLETE, ACCEPTED, and able to fulfill the works which God has ordained for our lives.

If you are not saved, you are IN ADAM and you are lost in your sins. You may be trying to live a life that is pleasing to God, but it is impossible. You may be religious, but religion will not save you. You MUST place your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.