

Jonathan Bayes: 16 May 2021

(Sermon Summary)

“In Christ” (Ephesians 1:1-12)

In the letter of Paul to the Ephesians, the phrase “In Christ Jesus”, “In Christ” or “In Him” occurs 21 times, more than in any other of Paul’s letters. But what significance does it have for us as Christians? This passage points us to seven aspects of being “in Christ”.

1. The place where we live (v1)

The first readers of the letter lived in Ephesus, but also “in Christ”. He is the atmosphere that we breathe. Despite our ongoing struggles with sin, we live as faithful saints because we are in Him. We are set apart to live for Him, and kept faithful by His grace.

Are you “in Christ Jesus”? You can come to Him, acknowledging your need and receiving the forgiveness that He freely gives.

2. The context in which we are blessed (v3)

God has “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ”. The word “blessed” is literally translated as “spoken well of”. Would the holy God really speak well of us? Yes, because he has reached down and lifted us up to the heavenly places in Christ. God sees the beauty of Jesus, which we radiate by His grace. He receives us and gives us His approval.

3. The name in which we are chosen (v4)

God was busy at the beginning of time, compiling a vast register of the names of all His people. Your name can never be removed from His register. If you lack assurance about your salvation, remember it is due to what God did then, and what Christ subsequently did when He came into the world - it is nothing to do with your feelings or what you do.

4. The reason we are accepted (v6)

We are accepted in the Beloved. Do you feel unacceptable, aware of your shortcomings, and ask how God can possibly accept you? It is only because we are “in Christ”. In Him we are not accepted grudgingly; Jesus, in his prayer at the Last Supper speaks of how God loves the disciples to the same degree that he loves His Son (John 17:23).

5. The basis of our redemption (v7)

Redemption means “rescued at a cost”. We have been rescued from sin and judgment at the cost of the blood of Christ. The book of Leviticus explains that the life is in the blood, and the blood makes atonement for the soul. Jesus’ blood was poured out on the Cross,

so that we could be rescued from death. Our sins have been forgiven by God's grace; he was under no obligation to send His Son but gave Him freely.

6. The guarantee of our future (vv10-11)

God's plan is to gather together everything in Christ, putting this broken world back together. This will happen at the appointed time and we will be caught up in it. We will all be there when Christ returns. The word "inheritance" indicates that this future is ours by right, because our names are written in the will of God.

7. An invitation to trust (v12)

We are invited to put our trust in Christ, to depend on Him and not on ourselves. He is true to His word and cannot let us down. For the sake of His own glory, God must save all who trust in Christ.

If you have trusted in Christ, then all these truths about being "in Christ" apply to you. If you have not yet trusted in Him, then come to Him: all who come to Him are received, welcomed and loved.