

OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Discovering who we are in Christ

Second Edition (Revised and enlarged)

Introduction

The Orphan Who Became An Heir

Imagine a young, orphaned boy living in the slums. He lives day to day, meal to meal. He fights for survival. His life is uncertain, at risk, each moment. He does not have much hope and cannot see beyond the moment. Imagine this orphaned slum boy is adopted by a very wealthy man into his own family. The boy needs to change his thinking, behavior, and way of living to adapt to what has happened. He needs to let go of his previous 'orphaned slum boy' mentality and learn to think as the son of a millionaire. What will happen if this boy grows up but does not change his thinking and behavior to what has happened in his life?

God Completes The Work And Invites Us To Live Out Of That

One of the most amazing revelations in the New Testament is that God has brought us into Christ. God planned and of His own will, purpose, and determination, incorporated us spiritually into Christ. He made us spiritually one with Jesus. He completely changed our identity, lavished His grace on us and gave us a rich inheritance in Christ.

God has done a great work for us the moment we got born again. He did it all by His grace. Now He, invites us to live out of what He has done for us.

Who You Are Because Of Whose You Are

We need to know who we are in Christ.

We need to know our identity and our inheritance in Christ and live out of that.

Who you are in Christ is who you really are.

How This Truth Will Change Your Life

It will change your self-image

Who you are in Christ, is who you really are. Learn to place your self-image and your self-worth not on your achievements, not on what other people say about you, etc., but on the simple fact of who you are in Christ.

It will change the way you relate to God

You relating to God, your daily fellowship with God, your entry into the presence of God is not based on your works. It is based on who you are in Christ.

It will change the way you face challenges and difficulties in life

Christ is in you, you are in Him and you are going to win. God and you are the majority.

It will change your lifestyle

It helps you overcome sin in your life. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Sin will no longer have dominion over you. You do not have to be in bondage to sin.

It will change the way you face demons and demonic powers

You can face demons and demonic powers with strong confidence when you know who you are in Christ.

It will change the way you relate to people

When you look at another person, although that person may not be very great in natural terms, if he is in Christ then he is a brother. You are not relating to him based on his education or qualification. He is a brother in Christ. You must treat him like that. If that brother has a more dynamic ministry, God bless him, he is your brother in Christ. You are not in competition, you are in collaboration, and are working together. You are one Body in Christ. You do not have to feel insecure. All of us are joined to the Lord.

God bless!

Ashish Raichur

SECTION ONE : REVELATION

1. YOU IN ME, I IN YOU

John 14:19,20

19 A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

20 At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

The Lord Jesus foretold that there shall come a time when His disciples will receive a revelation about their union with Him. God revealed much of this to the Church through Apostle Paul and others who wrote the New Testament. Throughout the Epistles we see the revelation of who we are in Christ being presented to us.

I in Christ, defines how the spiritual realm sees me.

Christ in me, makes it possible for Christ to be expressed in the natural realm through me.

2. THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

John 15:1–5

1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

The Lord used the illustration of a vine and its branches to communicate His relationship with His people.

We are ‘connected’ to Him spiritually. We are spiritually one with Him just the way a branch is one with the stem of the vine. What flows in the vine stem, also flows in the branches.

What is in Him is in us. The life of Christ flows in us. We are the fruit-bearing part of the vine—we manifest the Christ-life.

The seed is in the fruit. So, the fruit we bear are important for multiplication. When people see the fruit of the Christ-life in and through us, seeds are sown into their hearts for the Kingdom of God to be multiplied in them.

3. BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

The apostles, and primarily the apostle Paul, unveil for us the revelation of our union with Christ and thereby, our identity in Christ. We will consider the first chapter of Ephesians as an introduction to our study.

Ephesians 1:1-14

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

In these fourteen verses, the apostle Paul uses the “in Christ” or related phrases about ten times: vs 1: in Christ Jesus; vs 3: in Christ; vs 4: in Him; vs 6: in the Beloved; vs 7: in Him; vs 10: in Christ, in Him; vs 11: in Him; vs 13: in Him, in whom. There are over one hundred and fifty such references that speak about our identity, inheritance, and life in

Christ in the New Testament. Our goal in this study is to look through as many of these as possible and receive a good understanding of this truth.

In Ephesians 1:1-14, the apostle Paul uses sixteen descriptors of the believer's identity, inheritance, and life in Christ. We list them below:

- 1, Blessed (vs 3)
- 2, Chosen (vs 4)
- 3, Holy – set apart (vs 4)
- 4, Blameless, without blame – righteous (vs 4)
- 5, Covered in love – loved by the Father (4)
- 6, Predestined according to His purpose (vs 5,11)
- 7, Adopted as children (vs 5)
- 8, People for His praise – displaying His glory, revealing His grace (vs 6, 12)
- 9, Accepted in the Beloved (vs 6)
- 10, Redeemed (vs 7)
- 11, Forgiven (vs 7)
- 12, Recipients of abounding, overflowing grace (vs 8)
- 13, Gathered as one in Christ (vs 10)
- 14, Given an inheritance, obtained an inheritance (vs 11)
- 15, Sealed with the Holy Spirit (vs 13)
- 16, Purchased possession (vs 14)

Amazing! We will examine many of these in depth as we progress in this study on our identity in Christ as we discover who we are in Christ, the inheritance we have in Him and how to live out of our union with Him.

Interestingly, the apostle Paul states that God planned this 'before the foundation of the world'.

Ephesians 1:4

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

Even before He created the first man and woman, God already determined that He would have a people who would be "in Him", in Christ, and He would give them an identity, inheritance and life that would flow out of their life "in Christ".

4. A FINISHED WORK

Notice in the same passage of Ephesians 1:3-14, the past tense used in Scripture. Let us read these verses again, making note of the past tense:

Ephesians 1:3-14

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Here is what we can list out from the passage:

- Who has blessed us (vs 3)
- He chose us in Him (vs 4)
- He has predestined us to be adopted (vs 5)
- He has accepted us in the Beloved (vs 6)
- We have redemption (vs 7)
- We have obtained an inheritance (vs 11)
- We were sealed with the Holy Spirit (vs 13)

God is not planning to do these for us some time in the future. He has already completed these for us. This is a completed work, a finished work.

Since God's Word declares these as already accomplished, we need to embrace them as part of God's finished work for us. God has already finished the work. He now calls us to live out of the work He has already completed for us in Christ. And like these, we will discover many more that speak of our identity, inheritance, and life in Christ. Spiritual

realities that have been completed for us in Christ, which we are called to live from in our journey here on earth.

5. MYSTERY REVEALED

Having called out who the believer is in Christ, the apostle Paul now states refers to this as “the mystery of His will”.

Ephesians 1:9-10

9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

The mystery of His will has been made known to us. Christ is the mystery of God unveiled to us (Ephesians 3:4; 1 Timothy 3:16). All that God would do for us in Christ, is part of this “mystery of His will”.

The apostle Paul declares that God has made known or revealed this mystery to us. Later in Ephesians 3:6, Paul declares that this mystery includes having the Gentiles to share in this wonderful promise in Christ through the gospel.

Ephesians 3:1-7

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—

2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,

4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and **partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,**

7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

What a privilege we have today that this mystery has been revealed to the Church. Sadly, there are many believers, who have experienced the new birth and have made some measure of progress in their spiritual journey, but they do not know or may not have heard of this truth about their identity in Christ.

Understanding our identity in Christ and discovering our inheritance and our life in Christ is vital for victorious Christian living.

6. THAT YOU MAY KNOW

After the first 14 verses in Ephesians where the apostle Paul introduced this amazing truth of being “in Christ”, he goes on to pray that the believers at Ephesus will experience the enlightening of their spiritual understanding through the work of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Ephesians 1:15-23

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Our human spirit has at least seven functions:

Conscience – recognizing right and wrong

Knowing – spiritual revelation and knowledge

Communion – worship and fellowship with God

Container – of the life, nature, grace, power and glory of God

Identity – who you are in Christ

Action – believing, serving, interceding, fighting and getting things done in the spirit

Growth – growing into Christlikeness

One of these seven functions is to grow in knowledge. This is spiritual knowledge that come through the enlightening or revealing or revelation of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation = Perception + Illumination

Revelation is an outcome of perception (our ability to see spiritually) and illumination (light from the Holy Spirit that enlightens our understanding). For example, in the natural one could have perfect 20/20 vision, but in a dark room where there is absolutely no light, one will not be able to see anything. Similarly, if one is in a perfectly illuminated room, everything is bright, but has poor eyesight, things may not be seen. Applying this to the spiritual, revelation is a combination of our spiritual eyes being able to see, and the illumination that comes from the Holy Spirit. We pray that our eyes be opened and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, so we get revelation of spiritual truth.

In Colossians 1:26 the apostle Paul states that the mystery, which as we have stated earlier includes the truth of who we are in Christ and who Christ is in us, has been revealed to His saints.

Colossians 1:26-27

26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

So, God has revealed this truth by His Spirit to His people. (See also 1 Corinthians 2:9-10). This has been written for us in the Epistles, which we are searching out in this study.

Identity is as important function of the human spirit. Our human spirit carries identity in the spirit realm. And that is what we are discovering in this study, the identity we have already been given in the spiritual realm in Christ.

7. GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE

Finally, as we introduce this study, we must understand that our spirit needs to continually feed upon and grow in this revelation knowledge of who we are in Christ. We cannot afford to take the posture, that we have already heard it once, and know all there is to know about this subject. Our spirit needs to continually be renewed in knowledge.

Colossians 3:10

and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

The word "is renewed", literally, is continuously being renewed (Word Studies in the New Testament, M.R. Vincent). This is brought out clearly in The Passion Translation of this verse:

Colossians 3:10 (TPT)

For you have acquired new creation life which is continually being renewed into the likeness of the One who created you; giving you the full revelation of God.

We have become new creation in our spirit. We have new creation life. But our spirit must continually be renewed or continually grow in spiritual knowledge and understanding, continually increase in revelation of God and all He has done for us.

The goal of this study is for our spirit to be filled with the knowledge of this truth of who we are in Christ and live out of that revelation.

We grow in revelation through the study of God's Word under the illumination of the Holy Spirit.