

The Significance of Christ

Ephesians 2:11-22

Objective: Renew each one's devotion and zeal to serve by reminder of the significance of Christ to them.

Reading: Ephesians 2:11-22.

Introduction:

1. What God has done "in Christ" is the greatest thing that has ever happened on planet earth since the beginning of time – and it affects you and me personally. In Christ, we have the greatest gift, the greatest blessing of all time.
2. Sometimes we forget this treasure that we have in Christ, and forgetting allow room for jealousies, for worries, maybe covetousness, prejudice and a whole range of sin and worries.

We need to realize (or remember) what Christ means to us. (WHAT?)

Paul starts this letter with the statement that we have **"every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ"**, and he writes things to remind Christians what being "in Christ" means in their lives. Folks, realizing what we have "in Christ" would allow so many of our problems to just melt away, so let's look at what Paul writes to Christians in Ephesians 2:11-22, and see some of the very motivational things we ought to remember about being "in Christ" when we are confronted with worries or temptations.

Paul calls upon these Christians, to remember their former condition; and realize that before they had Christ they were separated from God. Folks ought to realize that for us as well,

I. Christ means restored relationship with God. Ephesians 2:11-12, **"Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."**

A. Even religious people, can be separated from God.

1. Folks without Christ don't have a saving relationship with God. They may have doctrine right, at least verbally, but if heart is not right, if spirit is not right, they don't really have Christ, and don't really have God.
2. Paul calls on the Ephesians to remember when they did not have Christ – and to start acting like they do now. Things should be different than they were before they had Christ!
3. Consider the Jews. They are very zealous religiously, but the New Testament repeatedly makes it clear they do not have a good relationship with God – didn't even recognize Him when He came in the flesh!
4. Romans 10:1-4, **"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.² For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.³ For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."**
5. Any group or individual today who is not really following Christ, does not have God. Any group or person who has not ever personally entered a covenant with Christ, does not have God.

B. No reason to expect blessings from heaven.

1. Without Christ means no citizenship in heaven. It is not their home or their destination.
2. It means no God-given promises. No right to expect His friendship or help. They are without God and really have no reason to even expect Him to answer prayer!

C. Without Christ means without hope.

1. Hope is good expectations for the future. W/o Christ folks have nothing good to look forward to! No heaven, No help, no destination, no purpose. Nothing.
2. Have you ever been in a bad situation where you were completely powerless to do anything?
 - a. Heart melts, hands limp, feel like crying and even that does no good.

- b. Without hope means only gloom and despair. Like 4 year old child lost in Mall; wanders around crying , collapses on floor. Any person who is not “in Christ”, living and acting in a covenant relationship, is lost just like this.
3. But in Christ – you do have HOPE! Reason to live with confident expectation!

With such hope, our hearts can rest at ease.

II. Christ means “peace”. Ephesians 2:13-18, **“But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷ AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.”**

A. We are “reconciled” in Christ.

1. Word “reconcile” (verse 16) means “together again”. Two parties can now join hands, sit together, talk together.
2. “Enmities”, “hostilities” are removed, and peaceable relationship is restored.

B. Christ means “peace” and “unity” with God, the Father.

1. 1 John 2:2-3, says of Christ, that, **“and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. ³ By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.”**
 - a. **“propitiation”, “atoning sacrifice (NIV)”** means the price for our freedom. On the cross, Christ paid for our sins, thus removing the barrier between us and God.
 - b. If we “know” Christ in such a way, we are “bought back” and have a restored relationship with the Father.
2. Christ is our access, our only means of peace and reconciliation with God.
 - a. John 14:6, **“Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”**
 - b. But if we do have Christ, we can have confidence in our peace with God.

C. Christ means “peace’ and “unity” with other Christians.

1. Christ breaks down barriers between people. All prejudicial barriers, as between Jews and Gentiles, between any races and cultures today, disappear when one has Christ!
2. Because their goal, motives, thoughts become the same as those of Jesus.
3. Christ’s action and His Lordship moves each to forgive whatever transgressions the other has against them; Matthew 6:14-15, **“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”** Christ not only inspires such forgiveness, He requires it!
4. Whatever barrier there has been between you and God, it comes down in Christ.
5. Whatever barrier there has been between you and another person, it comes down in Christ.

D. This is because one **“new man”** has been created.

1. This “new man” is the church. In the church, Christians become one body.
2. All become children of God; Galatians 3:26-27, **“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”**
3. In Christ, we are one new body, one new man. We are the church, which is the body of Christ! As such, we live by His spirit and are moved by His motives, and purposes. As we become “Christ” we have peace with God and peace with each other! No worries.

If we ever feel like we have no place where we belong, if we ever feel like we have no real purpose or goal in our life and no direction, we need to realize and remember that

III. Christ means citizenship in heaven. Ephesians 2:19-22 **“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, ²⁰**

having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

A. Christianity means functioning together as "**fellow citizens**".

1. Part of a common people with a common goal. The Apostle Peter says it like this; 1 Peter 2:9-10, "**But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.**"
2. Being "in Christ" means new loyalties. You are now someone very special!
3. Are you still off by yourself, living for you, or are you really in Christ, have you really become part of this new holy nation, the people of God?
4. Are you thinking of yourself as part of God's household? Are you acting like part of God's family? Do you think of the folks around you as brothers and sisters? Have you changed your thinking to line up with this Bible Truth? Do you think and act by yourself alone, or do you live the concept of Romans 12:5, "**...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.**"
5. In Christ, church members sense a feeling of belonging and they work together as a family.

B. Christianity means functioning together as the very dwelling place of Almighty God!

1. You are now part of something very special that God cares about and watches over.
2. The people, together, form The Temple to God. It is made of "Living stones" joined together by love and common purpose in Christ and standing together to be a dwelling of God's Holy Spirit!
3. Are you a part of this? Are you being built, upon the foundation of the Apostles, into a Holy temple with God's people?
4. The Bible knows no renegade Christians. All are supposed to be part of it; working in community with a congregation of saints to glorify God.
5. To be a citizen of God's holy kingdom installs confidence and comfort and purpose!
6. The unity of this new community is a powerful and glorious thing. John 17:22-23, "**The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; ²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.**" Sharing in glory, unity and God's love.

So What?

Is your Christianity really significant to you? Do you really have Christ? If you realize what it means to be "in Christ", to be a Christian, that realization will affect your rest and your work. "Rest" in Him in the sense of peace, good relations with God and man, security here and in eternity. "Work" in the sense of participation, service, growth in unity together with one another as the body of Christ, a temple to Almighty God.

We don't always live and function like the temple of God. We get busy with life. We let Satan distract us. When we forget the significance of Christ we get filled with fears and anxieties. We need to keep reminding ourselves. Keep your focus on Christ! Without Christ we don't have God. We have no hope. We have NOTHING! In Christ we have everything!

Closing Prayer:

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Ephesians 2:11-22

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Motivational things to remember about being “in Christ”.

I. Christ means relationship with God.

Ephesians 2:11-12

A. Even religious people, can be separated from God.

Romans 10:1-4

B. No reason to expect blessings from heaven.

C. Without Christ means without hope.

II. Christ means “peace”.

Ephesians 2:13-18

A. We are “reconciled” in Christ.

B. Christ means “peace” and “unity” with God, the Father.

1 John 2:2-3 John 14:6

C. Christ means “peace’ and “unity” with other Christians.

Matthew 6:14-15

D. This is because one “new man” has been created.

Galatians 3:26-27

III. Christ means citizenship in heaven.

Ephesians 2:19-22

A. Functioning together as “fellow citizens”.

1 Peter 2:9-10 Romans 12:5

B. As the very dwelling place of Almighty God!

John 17:22-23

So What?

Keep your focus on Christ.