

Only In Christ

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- [0 : 00] Well, this morning I'm going to be jumping about a bit in the Bible, but I'm going to read from Romans 6 and then 1 John 5.
- ! But alas, it has been delayed, and I thought it would be good to take this opportunity, particularly on the back of the focus on baptisms last week, just to think about being in Christ.
- And so in Romans 6, 23, it says, 1 John 5, 11 says, This is the testimony that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
- Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. Lord, as we consider these things, please would you by your Spirit illuminate your Word.
- Shine a light on your Son in our hearts. Convict us of our wayward ways. And lead us to God in Christ.
- [1 : 48] We pray in his name. Amen. Amen. In Glasgow City Centre, on Cathedral Street, you might know this, there was a building that used to have a big sign on the front of it, with illuminated letters saying, The Christian Centre.
- Remember that building? It had these big blocky illuminated letters saying, The Christian Centre. And I kid you not, at one point, not all the lights were working, and the sign said, The Ian Centre.
- Christ was not illuminated. I kid you not, it was unbelievable. And it just said, The Ian Centre. The most important part of the sign was no longer illuminated.
- But it did illustrate a crucial point. Without Christ, you're just an Ian. And when Christ is not the head and heart of a church, it becomes nothing more than an Ian Centre.
- Sorry, brother. Sorry. There are many assemblies that call themselves churches, that are really just Ian centres. And there are many individuals who call themselves Christians, but Christ is not really a feature in their lives.
- [3 : 18] Coming to church does not make a person a Christian. Just as gathering together in a building like this does not make a people a church.
- Without Christ, a church is not a church. And a Christian is not a Christian. It's just an Ian Centre full of Eans.
- Another way to say that is that being in a building does not mean that you are in the church. Nor does it mean that you will be in heaven.
- Being in a building does not mean that you will be in God's kingdom. And being in a directory of people does not mean that you will be in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- A couple of us spent some time with Jane the other day. And to quote you, and I said I would do this, Jane said, that going to church is not an insurance policy for heaven.
- [4 : 21] It's not. Only if you are in Christ will you be in the church proper, in the kingdom of God, in the family of God, in the assembly of Christ, in the body of Christ.

Only if you are in Christ will you be in the Father's house and in the Lamb's Book of Life. Only if you are in Christ. Now, if you will bear with me, there are actually many examples of Ian in the Bible.

And let's have a look at what they have in common. You've got a list in your contents, and I want to mention just a few. Corinth, Ian. Galatian.

Ephesian. Colossian. Philippian. Thessalonian. And so the suffix, Ian, is a way to describe people who are in or from or belong to that place.

If you are from or in or belong to Corinth, you are a Corinthian. If you are in or from or belong to Athens, you're an Athenian.

[5 : 35] If you are in or from or belong to Boston, what are you? a Bostonian. And so, see the connection.

If you've been around for a few years when we taught in the book of Acts, I mentioned in Acts chapter 11 how Luke writes that it was at Antioch when the disciples were first called Christians.

Acts 11 in Antioch was the first time the disciples were called Christians. Why was it at that point that the disciples were first called Christians? Well, as the gospel increased in the name of Jesus spread abroad, Antioch was actually the first place that Gentiles and Jews came together in a church.

The first mixed church. And as such, people who were looking on and seeing this could no longer define these people in the usual classifications.

this was an entirely new group of people. They didn't normally do this. Jews and Gentiles didn't normally mix. And so, you couldn't call them Antiochians or whatever they call them there.

[6 : 47] You couldn't use the normal classifications. The only way to describe these people were a people belonging to Christ. Little Christs. The thing that bound these people together was not their city or their ethnicity but a person, namely Christ.

A Christian properly means one who is in Christ. One who lives in Christ. One who is from Christ.

One who belongs to Christ. A Christian. I love it. If Christ is not the Lord of your life, then you're not a Christian.

Going to some building does not make any person a Christian. Now, I want to show how this connection relates to baptism and communion and how there's a connection between baptism and communion.

But let me show you why it's a matter of eternal significance whether or not you're in Christ. You may be in many things. You may be in many groups and many places but unless you are in Christ, let's have a little look at what you will miss out on.

[8 : 10] Romans 3.24 says that justification and redemption are in Christ. Romans 6.11 says that we can be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ.

Romans 6.23 as we read says that eternal life is in Christ. Romans 8.1 says that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

Romans 8.2 says that the spirit of life sets you free in Christ. Romans 8.39 says that the love of God is in Christ.

Romans 12.5 says that people are united as one body in Christ. 1 Corinthians 1.2 says that we are sanctified in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1.4 says that grace was given in Christ. 1 Corinthians 15 says that we have hope beyond this life in Christ.

[9 : 05] 1 Corinthians 15 says that all will be made alive who are in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5.17 says that you are a new creation in Christ if you are in Christ.

Galatians 3.14 says that the blessing of Abraham is in Christ. Galatians 3.26 says that through faith you are a child of God in Christ.

Ephesians 1.3 says that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Ephesians 2.6 says that we are seated in the heavenly places in Christ.

Ephesians 2.7 says that the immeasurable riches of God's grace and kindness is in Christ. Ephesians 2.13 says that having been far off we have been brought near in Christ.

Ephesians 4.32 says that God's forgiveness is in Christ. Philippians 3.9 says that righteousness is in Christ. Philippians 4.19 says that God's riches and glory are in Christ.

[10 : 15] 1 Thessalonians 5.18 says that the will of God is in Christ. 2 Timothy 1.1 says that the promise of life is in Christ. 2 Timothy 2.1 says that grace is in Christ.

2 Timothy 2.10 says that salvation with eternal glory is in Christ. 1 Peter 5.10 says that God calls us to his eternal glory in Christ.

1 Peter 5.14 says that peace belongs to all who are in Christ. Christ. Now that is a strict semantic search for the phrase in Christ but we know that this semantic exercise is just a fraction of what is really in Christ.

For instance 2 Corinthians 1 says that all the promises of God find their yes in him and so if you do a search for in him you'll find even more. There's many ways to say it.

2 Corinthians 5.21 says for our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[11 : 29] The point is everything good that you could imagine and desire and hope for and need is in Christ Jesus God's son. The apostle John put it this way this is a testimony that God gave us eternal life and this life is in his son whoever has the son has life whoever does not have the son of God does not have life in him there is no darkness at all in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily in him all things hold together again the point is all of these things!

such as! justification redemption salvation no condemnation freedom righteousness grace hope glory and eternal life all of these things are not in this building they're not even in a book they are in Christ and Jesus said to the Bible experts as we read in John 5 you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life but it is they that bear witness about me yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life they thought that eternal life was in a scroll in the scriptures but the scriptures were trying to tell them that eternal life is in a person namely Jesus yet they refuse to go to him that they may have life many people go to churches yet refuse to come to Christ that they may have life you see with this verse in John 5 about the Pharisees there were even eons back in

Jesus day take Christ out of the equation and you have none of these things no forgiveness no redemption no salvation no freedom no grace no hope no life outside of Christ there is only condemnation despair and death God sent his only son not to judge the world but to save the world to give his only son on the cross that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life now it is a terrible thing to build your house on sand sand if to land to build your life on sand thinking that sand is a safe foundation is a terrible thing it might be okay for a season but when the water comes and there is a flood coming and God has provided us a rock to stand upon namely

Jesus there's a flood coming because it's appointed to man once to die and then comes the judgment because God is just justice we would not want an unjust God we know what injustice looks like on the earth and what a terrible thing it would be if there was a God who was not just and so God must!

judge sin but and so there's a flood coming but but God has given us a rock to stand upon namely Jesus all other things will not hold us up and it might seem like the beach house is standing just fine but when the water comes the sandy foundation will not hold you up many people have a beach house in this world they've built their lives on many things and at the moment it's standing but when the water comes sand disappears real quick and so what are we building our lives upon are we in Christ because in the end that is all that will matter last week we saw some baptisms and it should be said that anyone can be baptized anyone anyone can be baptized anyone can get into water and get wet it's incumbent upon the people of the

[15 : 37] Lord to try as best we can to verify that a person truly repents and believes in Jesus before they're baptized but in the end man only sees the outside but God sees the heart so anyone can be baptized being in water is not a guarantee for anything but getting wet that's all it guarantees one can be baptized without being in Christ but if one is in Christ then they should be baptized because if Jesus is their Lord and he has commanded something we ought to obey for Jesus said those who love me obey my commands and those who obey my commands are those who love me and so if we've been baptized we know that that didn't save us being in water doesn't save you but being in Christ saves you likewise we're coming to the table of communion anyone can eat a bit of bread and drink some grape juice it doesn't guarantee salvation having a place at this table does not automatically give any of us a place in his kingdom only if we are in

Christ you can take communion without being in Christ but if you are in Christ then you will want to remember him again if Christ is your Lord and your saviour you'll obey his command to do this in remembrance of him and your heart would desire and absolutely delight to give thanks in remembrance for his body and his blood and so for the person who is not in Christ baptism is just water communion is just bread and juice but for the person who is in Christ these things have much more meaning and significance both of these things baptism and communion are uniquely given by the Lord to represent him and to represent us both of these things are an allegiance to his name both of these things relate to his death and his resurrection and both of these things relate to our union with him and relate to our own death and resurrection

Romans 6 says that being baptized into Christ is being baptized into his death that it is to be buried with him and by baptism into death so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we too may walk in newness of life if we are united with Christ in a death like his we will be united with him in a resurrection like his likewise of communion in 1 Corinthians 10 it says the cup of blessing that we bless is a participation in the blood of Christ and the bread that we break is a participation in the body of Christ Paul says because there is one bread we who are many are one body for we partake of the one bread what he is saying is that our partaking of the cup and bread is a partaking of the body and blood of Jesus that was broken and poured out for us that we are participating in his death as he takes our sin to the cross but we are also participating in his life as we are united to him in his body and in the as we come to communion if you happen to take a little piece of bread and a little cup what that does when you take that is it suggests that you believe that

Jesus is God's son and your Lord taking that bread and that cup suggests that you believe that Jesus gave his body to be broken and blood to be shed for your sins and that God rose him from the dead it suggests taking that little bit of bread and that little cup suggests that you are in Christ trusting in him for forgiveness and salvation and so for you who are in Christ this will mean something amazing of great significance and assurance and hope however if you're not in Christ if that's not what you believe and Christ is not your Lord then it will mean nothing to you and it will do nothing for you even if you take it because you're worried about what people will think if you leave it what does it matter in the end taking it will not save you only Christ will it's not about the person next to you or what will happen to someone else there was a moment when a disaster happened and people asked

Jesus what about them what happened to them and Jesus says what about you you will only answer for you and so as we come to the table are we in Christ and I hope that coming to this building coming to this assembly coming to this table that we are reminded of what really matters that none of this can save us but all of this is supposed to point us to Christ who does save us that we might have life and you see baptism is coming to Christ that you may be in Christ and communion is that being in Christ we keep coming to Christ if you've not been baptized and you really are a Christian you're repenting and believing then you ought to be baptized we can talk about that not because it saves you but because it is one of the first ways to show not only to people but to

[21 : 46] Jesus with your mouth and body that you are coming to him and when you have come to him we continually come to him in remembrance not because the bread and cup saves us but because by the bread and by the cup we are coming to the one who does save us and so as we come to the table let it be that because we are in Christ we delight to come to Christ in remembrance and thanksgiving for all of who he is and for all that he has done and does and will do for his glory and for our good and so we're going to sing and prepare ourselves to come to the table happy