

2 Timothy Ch1:1, 9-12 - Given Us In Christ

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[0 : 00] Thank you Jonathan. I'm going to get set up here. I think it's nearly every single time I preach I end up adjusting the pulpit when I come up.

But I've learned to do it at the start, not midway through when it's dropping or something. So thanks again Jonathan, thanks for leading this morning. And yeah, let's just ask for the Lord's help again as we look at his word together this morning.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, you are good and gracious and kind and loving. And it is a privilege to open up your word to us this morning.

And we know that you give us your spirit so that the things that are on the page would change our hearts. And we come to you in humility.

We don't have the answer, but you do because you are God Almighty. Help us this morning to hear from you. Amen. Augustine in the fifth century said, Every person, whatsoever their condition, desires to be happy.

[1 : 42] Now each of our radars for happiness are tuned that little bit differently. For some, getting a Taylor Swift concert ticket, that's happy. Maybe it's getting into a dating relationship, one that's going to get me towards marriage.

It's a bigger paycheck at the end of the month, less tax maybe. Or you get to my age, 46 today. And happiness is an armchair nap on a Sunday afternoon in front of the telly.

So, as I said, our happiness radars, they're all tuned a bit differently. And it's often made up of small little things, isn't it? It's not often just one big thing, but lots of things that bring us joy or satisfaction or bring us blessing.

But the little bits of happiness that each one brings, I don't know about you, but it never seems to quite add up enough to be the good life. It never quite gets me there.

And maybe we've tried different ways. Be reliable. Work hard. Do right. Or maybe we've flipped and gone. Be free. Spread our wings. Push the boundaries out.

[2 : 52] And it kind of doesn't seem to matter which way we go. It doesn't seem to work out. Trying to get the good life, chasing it, just seems to push it that slight bit further and further away each time.

For half of us, we're still hopeful about the good life. Maybe we're younger. Maybe we see all the things that are out there and say, Oh, we can get it. It's out there. And possibly for some of us, maybe my kind of age, you've kind of given up.

And you've become a bit detached or even a bit cynical about it all, about having the good life.

Greek mythology, Tantalus. Blank looks.

That's okay. Tantalus, he was made to stand in a pool of water beneath a fruit tree with low-hanging branches. Can you picture that? Pool of water, fruit tree, low-hanging branches.

And whenever he reached for the fruit, the branches would lift just beyond his grasp. So he'd reach up and, ugh. And whenever he bent down to drink, the water would recede just that little bit out of reach.

[4 : 00] And the pursuit of happiness is like that. It's all tantalizingly close. Now, what if I told you this morning that happiness could be found?

Not just found, but really found and fully found. Not this piecemeal, bit by bit, acquiring happiness. But, I mean, a happiness that can be grasped and secured.

And it all just hinges on this one little word. Well, that one little word this morning is in. Okay?

You got it? Two letters? We can manage this. That one little word this morning is the word in. And if we can grasp in, we can grasp happiness as a Christian.

We've been asking these past few weeks that big question, haven't we? What is a Christian? What is a Christian? And for this last sermon, I want to kind of summarize it or pull it together in some ways with this.

[5 : 09] A Christian is in Christ and Christ is in them. And by being in Christ, we are happy.

And this idea, if you want to think of a theological term or a big, big, big, big heading item to put it under, is called union with Christ.

Being in Christ and Christ in us. And union in Christ, it's a kind of gravity that just pulls everything together in Jesus.

These past weeks, we've talked about the good life. We've talked about being saved by grace. Our dependence on God through prayer. Our being together as church.

Our hatred of sin. And our love for others, even our enemies. And this good life, all of these experiences as a Christian, they all pull together in Christ.

[6 : 11] And they all flow from him and connect to us because we are in Christ. Think of the ways to describe a Christian in the New Testament.

If you open up your Bibles and you were to think, what's a Christian called? Christian. That's a good one. I've given you one. We've started. Okay. How many times do you think? Three.

Three times Christian is mentioned in the Bible. Well, it's not very many. Good term. Believers.

That's another good one, isn't it? Thirteen times. Okay. We're getting a bit better here.

In the book of Acts, you get this idea of being a follower of the way. Have you ever heard that phrase? Of the way? Follower of the way? Six times. Here's a big one. Saints.

So you're called a saint. A holy one. A set apart one for God. Sixty times. But this is the big one. In Christ. Talking about you.

[7 : 11] In him. That is Jesus. In the Lord. Depending on how you count it up and look at it, probably over 200 times.

The most common way you, in your relationship to God and to Jesus, are described in the Bible, in the New Testament, is that you are in him.

You are in Christ. You are in the Lord. Such a small word. But it's everywhere in the New Testament. And this little word in, honestly, I think it's the key to Christian happiness.

And we need to pour over our Bibles, a little like we did this morning, look at Ephesians for it. And every time we see in him, in the Lord, in Christ, whether you have a physical pen or a virtual pen in your head, get it out and underline the phrase.

And look at what it says. And just meditate on those words. And think of what that means to be in Christ. Or the thing is in Christ.

[8 : 19] To see how big *Litling* is, we're going to look in detail at 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 9 and 10. There are two key verses for this morning.

Verses 9 and 10. Let me read them again for us to focus us in this morning. He, that is God, has saved us and called us to a holy life.

Not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

And it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to life through the gospel.

Now, I didn't put much emphasis on it, see if you'd spot it. But where's the in? Can you see the in? Which verse? It's verse 10, isn't it? This grace was given us in Christ Jesus.

[9 : 22] And so we're going to look at verses 9 and 10. We're going to grab in and we're going to hold on to it this morning as we go through these verses. It says grace has been given us in Jesus.

Grace has been given us in Jesus. You see, in, that little word, is what anchors us to the very source of grace, Christ Jesus.

Grace, we spoke about it a few weeks ago. Grace is that blessing or favor and that care to us, not because we're especially good or because we're deserving, but a love and a care and a blessing that flows to us because the other person simply loves us.

grace has been given us.

grace is in Jesus. So it's not just a daily scoop or two of grace that gets handed out from the ice cream truck.

[10 : 52] It's not a shot of grace that we take just before that meeting at 11 a.m. tomorrow that we're dreading going to. It's not even a bucket of grace for the next week or two that we receive.

Because you see, grace is in Jesus. It's in him. And that's how it's been given to us. So do you want grace in your life? Be in Jesus and let him be in you. That's how you experience grace. You see, it's quite easy, if you think about it, to offer a Christ-less grace.

It can start well enough from our preaching or our thinking or how we talk about it. We say, Jesus died for you. You need to come to him.

[11 : 56] You can receive grace for your life today from Jesus to you. But did you notice that just in three sentences I've said you four times?

And so we've kind of subtly learned to come to Jesus. To guess what? Well, grace. Grace for today. Yes, please.

Forgiveness for my sins and no more guilt. Sign me up. I'll take some of that. Peace in my heart. Oh, I'd love a double dose of that. Knowing that the creator and sustainer of the whole universe is watching my back.

Tick, check. I'll accept all terms and conditions on that one. But you see, it's all now become somewhat Christ-less.

It's a pursuit of happiness through Jesus. But Jesus has just become a useful conduit for what I need. And it's a kind of receiving that requires no real change on my behalf.

[13 : 11] No real commitment. No change. Give me grace. Thank you very much. It's a pagan and Christ-less Christianity that we can subtly offer.

And we're trained in our daily lives to transact that kind of business. Negotiate with mom and dad about bedtime. Do the small favor for the person that can pay us back.

Wash the dishes to stop the nagging. Do business with God. Give me the blessings that Christ offers. Remember the story that Jesus shared about the prodigal son.

It's well known. I hope you're familiar with the details. But it's a story really about not just the prodigal son, but a father with two sons.

And when it comes to God our father, we're either like the younger prodigal son who comes up to the father and says, Give me my inheritance now. Or we're like the older son who continues to work hard on the farm, but really we're just eyeing up the whole farm at the end.

[14 : 27] Both sons were pulling from the father. And we think we're not as blatant as that or we're not as bad as how we treat God. But in reality, we can think that we're happiest when we do the minimum to pull just what we need from God.

We think we're at our happiest when we can do the minimum to pull just what we need from God because we're transactional with God. But it's only when we come to our senses like the prodigal son and run back and we put ourselves into the arms of the father, that we grasp it all and we secure it all and we have it all in him.

It's birthday season in the Deppian household. You might have picked that up, 46 today. But actually we have four birthdays in a span of 17 days. And this year we had five birthdays because the dog Oscar turned one on the 1st of July.

So he was the right dog for us. He was a July baby. So we had five birthdays in 17 days. But what mattered most when I woke up this morning on my birthday? I mean, what really, really, really mattered as I woke up?

I could have woken up this morning and wandered down to the kitchen and we've put our presents on the far end of the table. I don't know where you usually have yours for the birthday person. And I could have been surprised at the usual stack of presents at the far end.

[15 : 54] We're missing. Oh, my goodness. Well, you know, Ralph, things are a bit tight this year. Holidays coming up on post. Acting up again.

Blame Brexit. But you know what? We love you as a family. We really care about you. Would I be disappointed? I did, yeah, a little somewhat, you know.

But being in the family, it's not about those little microtransactions. It's not about the one-offs. It's not about the bits and the pieces that we get from each other, is it? It is each other.

It's about being in the family. That's what matters. That's what shapes everything. It's what brings the joy and the happiness when you receive the gifts.

It's about being in the family. So let me ask you, what matters most when you think about the gospel? What really matters when it comes to Jesus?

[16 : 55] Or put it this way, what is it that you want? What is it that's being offered in the gospel? Well, the Bible says that what's offered is simply this.

Jesus himself. What's offered in the gospel is simply this. Jesus himself.

Not bits of Jesus. Or a part of Jesus. Or just the benefits of Jesus. That Jesus won. Jesus is offered.

Union with him. John Murray says the whole gamut, that's everything, of redemptive grace is included.

Salvation in all its aspects. It's not just forgiveness of sins. It's not just grace for today or the mercy that you need or the peace that is essential or heavenly home that is offered in the gospel.

[18 : 06] It's Jesus himself that's on offer. It's all of these things in him. We've grabbed in and seen that our blessing is really, really about being graciously united to Jesus.

This is the blessing. This grace was given us, it says in verse 10, in Christ Jesus. Verse 9. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

But it also tells us when it was given. But it's not the when that we might have come up with. You see, I tend to think that my union with Christ started when I believed the gospel.

But see what it says. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. God started that process of me coming to him before time began.

Before it all kicked off. Before the little atoms started to move and to pulsate and to get together. Before the sun and the stars and the mountains and the seas and the whole universe came into being.

[19 : 29] God, he put me safely in Christ. Before I had done right or wrong. Before I could choose to follow Jesus.

God, God put me in him. God gave me an eternal grace. Before I took my first breath.

And he placed me in his son. God the father and God the son. They planned in eternity past.

To show grace to me. Wow. How do you feel? I feel like that little word in.

It kind of pulls out of the page. And it gets stretched to eternity. And now it's wrapping me all up in Christ. Because I'm united to him always and forever.

[20 : 34] And as we look back at verse 9. And it says that he has saved us and called us to holy life. Not because of anything we have done.

But because of his own purpose and grace. It makes sense. It makes total sense. That we did nothing to deserve this.

Makes total sense. When we were placed in Christ before time began. It didn't start with me. It started with him.

He has saved us and called us to a holy life. Not because of anything we have done. But because of his own purpose to bring glory to his own name.

And because of his grace towards us. It was all of him. And nothing of me. We're in him. And we've always been in him.

[21 : 30] And you've got to hold on to that Christian. You've got to see that it's you in Christ. And Christ in you. The hope of glory. Since before the world began.

Back to birthdays. When it comes to birthdays. There are some big numbers. One of the big numbers is 18. That's an important milestone. I did threaten Chris that he'd come up in the sermon. Poor fella. Well that's the last birthday in the Deppian household tomorrow. Christopher is turning 18. And I want to tell you son. The government has planned a lot of responsibility and privilege for you now Chris.

Now that you're turning 18. You're old enough to vote. You're old enough to consume alcohol.

You're going to be old enough to serve in our armed forces. And you're old enough to take on debt.

All you're able to do was conceived by governments a long time ago and written down so there's no surprises. But it still takes your 18th birthday to bring about these actual things.

[22 : 35] So the day itself is still important. But it's all been planned out for you already. What you can do now that you're turning 18. And in a way it's like that with our being in Christ.

The things that were planned in the past have to come about in time. You see our grace in Christ couldn't just stay in heaven or in eternity past.

For the world needed a saviour to come. And if we go back to verse 10. That's why this next bit is so important. I'm going to read from the end of verse 9 again.

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. Verse 10. But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our saviour Christ Jesus.

Who has destroyed death. And has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Christ couldn't stay in heaven.

[23 : 35] For the world needed a saviour to come. And that's those critical days of Jesus here on the earth.

A grace that is now being revealed. And this is good news. This is great news. This is death destroying.

And life bringing good news. Jesus our saviour came. And when he came. I don't know if you've thought about this. Because we were in him in eternity past.

When Jesus came. He came with us. In him. See union from Christ. From eternity.

That means Jesus when he came. We were there with him. And in him. So Jesus when he went to the cross and he died.

[24 : 31] It was you in him that he carried. Jesus paid not for his own sin. He was sinless. But he carried you to the cross.

And he paid for your sin on the cross. Because he carried you in him. When Jesus was taken down. And buried. And put in the ground. We were buried with him. We were dead in the ground to sin.

And when Jesus rose again.

We rose. And he brought us with him. When he went to heaven to be with the father. And Jesus is in heaven now.

Physically resurrected. A man in heaven. The God man. Interceding for us. His beautiful bride. Each and every day.

[25 : 30] Verse 10. He destroyed death. That's the death of death. In the death of Christ.

The death of death. In the death of Christ. And in the risen Jesus. Is life immortal. Verse 10. And our salvation.

And so each beat of Jesus' life. Each thing he did. Each movement through his time on earth. Is our life.

Because we were there with him. And in him. Romans chapter 6. Verses 4 to 11. You don't need to turn to it.

I have the key things up there. From those verses. Summarizes all. All of this. And it's really just to highlight. Another part of scripture. That talks about being in Christ.

[26 : 26] But summarizes all of it. For us. Romans 6. 4. 11. It just makes it so clear. We were buried with him. Through baptism.

As a symbol. Into his death. Just as Christ was raised from the dead. We too may live a new life. We have been united with him.

In a death like his. United with him. In a resurrection like his. The old self was crucified with him. We died with Christ.

We also live with him. We live with him. We live to God. In Christ Jesus. His life is our life in him.

And verse 9. At just the right time in your life. God. Verse 9. Called you into the good life with Jesus.

[27 : 24] He has saved us. And called us. To a holy life. Because you have eternity past. And you have Jesus' life on earth.

And it all catches up to us. When we're born. And becomes real. As I was knit together in the womb. Christ had me.

As I was wandering off the roads. Down the ballet road. To primary school. Jesus' hand was on me. As I turned in faith.

To embrace Jesus. And I was baptized. I was aged 14. God was working out. His eternal purpose. And grace. In me.

In Christ. There is. There is that crucial moment of conversion. That really matters. We're in Christ in eternity. We were with Christ.

[28 : 18] Through his whole life. And existence here on earth. And in. Into heaven. And that moment of conversion. Is so important. Of being born again.

Being born of God. Born from above. It's like being. It's like being woken up from a sleep. And we stop reaching for the fruit. That is just out of reach.

And we stop reaching for the water. That can never satisfy. Instead we find. That we've been planted. In him. And we have everything.

In and through. Jesus. When we come to faith. In him. The psalmist. In Psalm 1. And this applies to Jesus. Mostly applies to Jesus.

Because Jesus is the greatest. Jesus. Is like a tree. Planted by streams of water. Which yields its fruit.

[29 : 16] In season. In season. And whose leaf. Does not wither. Whatever. Jesus does. Prospers. Jesus. Is the fruit.

Yielding tree. Planted by the streams of water. And we're happy. In him. He is the living water.

And the fruit for our lives. That is always. Always within reach. Three. Three. Three. Brief ways.

To enjoy. Being a Christian. In Jesus. First. I want to ask you this morning. Have you heard the call of Jesus?

Jesus. This might be all very new to you. But even this morning. Have you heard something of the call of Jesus? He's moving in your heart.

[30 : 11] He's showing himself to you through the gospel. That great news of who he is. And what he has done. God. The son.

Eternal. The death destroyer. And the life giver. If you're looking for happiness. Or you've given up hope for happiness. I don't know where you are. It doesn't actually matter.

He is all. Come to him. Pray this morning. Jesus. You are God eternal. I want you to rescue me.

And I want to put my life in you. So that you have me. And I have you forever. Forgive me for my sin against you. Help me to know your love.

By your spirit. Amen. Put your trust. Put your life in Jesus. Secondly. Don't. Don't split Jesus up.

[31 : 13] Don't split Christ up. Our self hearts. Even as Christians. We want the benefits of Jesus. A kind of Christ. Less Christianity. Guilt free.

Pain free. Worry free living. But don't split Jesus up. And look to take his blessings from him. And kind of leave him behind.

What he has done is for the glory of the father. And for our good. And it's all in him. It's what he has done. And who he is.

It's all in him. The work that he did. Saving you in the cross. It's in him. So be in him. Grace. Mercy. Peace.

Hope. Forgiveness. New birth. The clear conscience. It's all in him. Because he deserves all those things. And he now graciously gives them to you.

[32 : 10] In him. The Christian life is the good life. As we move. And as we live. And as we breathe in him. Finally.

Walk through life. In the happiness and joy. That Jesus enjoys. You see. There's no joy. In this world. Like union with Christ.

The more we can feel it. The happier we are. Why is that? Why? Why? Why? Why are we happy in Christ?

Well anyone who understands. True happiness. Will say that God is most happy. Anyone that understands true happiness. Will say that God is most happy.

Since he. Needs nothing. He finds all comfort in himself. He possesses all things. Is free from evil. And filled with all good.

[33 : 10] Jesus is most happy. Jesus is the most blessed. And happiest. Person. And man. No one is happier than Jesus.

And his joy is ours. Christian. Enjoy happiness. Enjoy in Jesus. Paul. Felt this. We didn't look at it in detail.

But verses. 11. 12. I think. Give a sense of that application. Of. Being in Christ. Paul writes. And of this gospel. I was appointed a herald.

And an apostle. And a teacher. That is why. I am suffering as I am. Yes. This is. No cause for shame. Because I know.

Whom I have believed. And I am convinced. That he is able. To guard what I have entrusted. To him. Until that day.

[34 : 06] You see. Gospel. Preaching. Brought suffering for Paul. But so what? So what? Paul had no shame. Or he had no cause for alarm. Because Paul knew.

Who he believed. And he was convinced. That no matter. What he had given over to Jesus. Or that Jesus had given to him. It was all good. It was all good. It was all secure.

All wrapped up in him. From eternity. Past. I'd like to end. By reading some more words of Paul.

It's up on the screens. Philippians chapter 3. Verses 8 to 11. If you'd like to turn to it. In your Bibles. It's page 1180. In the church Bible.

But it's also up on the screen. I'd like to end this morning. By reading these words. And I just pray. That we would grasp. What it is to be in Jesus. Paul writing.

[35 : 02] Of his own life. What is more. I consider. Everything a loss. Because of the surpassing worth. Of knowing. Christ Jesus. My Lord. For whose sake.

I have lost. All things. I consider them. As garbage. That I may gain. Christ. And be found in him. Not having a righteousness. Of my own. That comes from the law. But that. Which is. Through faith. In Christ. The righteousness. That comes. From God.

On the basis. Of faith. Oh. I want to know. I want to know. Christ. Yes. To know the power. Of his. Resurrection.

And participation. In his sufferings. Becoming like him. In his death. And so. Somehow. Attaining. To the resurrection. From the dead.

[35 : 58] Amen. Let's pray. Thank you.

Father. For a glimpse. From your word. Of. A little word in. And. Just being in Jesus. We.

We couldn't script it ourselves. We couldn't. We couldn't pull it all together. If. If we were given a blank page. And told to write it down. Father. We would just. We would just take the little bits.

As we could get them. We wouldn't think of happiness. As being in Jesus. Oh. But we thank you. That when we see Jesus. And we see all of Jesus. And we see the whole Christ.

And we see the offer. Offer of Jesus. We just want to be there. And. Father. I ask. For your help. That each day.

[36 : 52] That as we walk as believers. That we would see from your word. What it is to be in. Jesus Christ. That we would have comfort. And security. And happiness.

Through this life. Because of Jesus. For your. Purpose. And glory. We thank you. For the grace. That you've given us. In Jesus. Amen. Amen. We're blessed. By a lot of good songs. That speak of our.

Being in Christ. And this is a classic. At this stage. In Christ. Alone. In Christ. We've spoken about. And alone. There are no other options.

He is the only God man. From eternity. That loves you. Has died for you. And rescues. And saves you. Christ. Alone. No one else.

[37 : 49] Nowhere else. Nothing else. This song is going to help us. To focus on him. To look to Christ. Alone. In everything.

So. If you're able to. Please. Feel free to stand. As we sing together. This morning. Amen. Thank you.