

In Christ

In the Bible, Paul's letter to the Ephesians naturally divides into two sections. The last section consists of the last three chapters. It describes the response Christians should have to God's great blessings in Christ. The first section describes those great blessings. In those first three chapters, phrases like "in Christ Jesus" or "through Him" occur at least thirty times. Each of these occurrences indicates a unique blessing that is available only in Christ. In fact, Ephesians 1:3 says,

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...

Indeed, every spiritual blessing is in Christ, including these that are named in Ephesians:

- Holiness (1:4)
- Blamelessness (1:4)
- Adoption as children of God (1:5)
- God's grace (1:6)
- Redemption (1:7)
- Forgiveness of sins (1:7)
- An inheritance (1:11)
- Hope (1:12)
- Salvation (1:13)
- Life (2:5)
- A spiritual resurrection (2:6)
- God's kindness (2:7)
- A God-given purpose (2:10)
- Nearness to God (2:13)
- Peace with God (2:14)

Because every spiritual blessing is in Christ, none are found outside of Him. Unless you are in Christ, you cannot have any of these blessings.

So then, how can you be in Christ? Consider how the Ephesian Christians came to be in Christ. In Ephesians 1:13-14, Paul writes,

¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

When the Ephesians listened to the message of truth and believed it, they received the Holy Spirit's seal that they were in Christ. But what exactly did they do? For the answer, consider Acts 19:3-5:

³And [Paul] said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It was at the point of baptism that the Ephesians entered into Christ. In fact, the following Scriptures indicate explicitly that believers are baptized into Christ:

Romans 6:3 – Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

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Galatians 3:27 – For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Therefore, to be in Christ, you must do what the Ephesians did. You must follow the steps to salvation and eternal life given by the Scriptures:

- Hear the gospel (Romans 10:17)
- Believe in Christ (John 3:16)
- Repent of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Confess Christ (Romans 10:9-10)
- Be baptized (Mark 16:16)

Are you in Christ?