

CHAPTER 2:11-22

In this section of chapter 2, Paul describes the greatest blessing that salvation brings – being one *in Christ*. This is a simple truth that has far reaching implications for everything from living life in the now to looking forward to the future...how to face trials now and how to appreciate blessings.

There are two types of people in the world, those *in Adam*, and those *in Christ*. There are no other types of people – you are either *in Christ* or you are *in Adam* – there is no middle ground. A person cannot be *sort of* in Christ or *sort of* in Adam. In this section, Paul explains *some* of what it means to be *in Christ*.

In order to truly appreciate the truth of being *in Christ*, we need to understand what it is like to be *in Adam*.

1 Corinthians 15:20–24 (20) But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **(21)** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. **(22)** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. **(23)** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. **(24)** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. **(ESV)**

Romans 5:12–21 (12) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— **(13)** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **(14)** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. **(15)** But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. **(16)** And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. **(17)** For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. **(18)** Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **(19)** For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. **(20)** Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, **(21)** so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. **(ESV)**

In these two passages which are very similar, Paul is telling us that all people are born *in Adam*, and being *in Adam* results in death – “in Adam all die”. In order to live, you must be found *in Christ* – “in Christ, all shall be made alive.” Paul, in no uncertain terms, is saying that every human born is represented by one of two people – Adam or Christ, and in Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul showed us not only that everyone born is born *in Adam*, but how someone is moved from being *in Adam* to being *in Christ*, from being without hope and without God in the world to being filled with hope and adopted into the family of God!

In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul tells us some of the wonders of being found *in Christ*.

1. In verse 11, Paul starts off with the word *therefore*. A good rule of thumb in understanding the bible is to remember this phrase: “When you see a *therefore*, you should find out what it is there for.”
 - a. What is the *therefore* there for? (in other words, what is the *therefore* referring to?)
 - b. Why would Paul start his teaching on being *in Christ* by encouraging us to look back?
2. In verses 11 and 12, after the *therefore*, Paul calls us to remember two things.

- a. What are the two things that he wants us to remember?
3. Because he starts with a *therefore*, Paul wants to connect the awesome things that God has done for us to those things that he wants us to remember.
 - a. Why do you suppose Paul wants us to remember those specific things (from question 2) while thinking about what God has done for us?
 - b. Does this bring you hope? Why or why not?
4. In verse 11, Paul uses the word *Gentiles*.
 - a. Look up that word. Who is Paul referring to when he uses the word *Gentiles*?
5. In verse 11, Paul uses the word *circumcision* to refer to two groups of people.
 - a. What is *circumcision*? Who performs the kind of circumcision that Paul is referring to here?
 - b. What significance does it have? (read Genesis 17:10-14; Acts 11:1-3; Romans 2:28-29)
 - c. Who are “the uncircumcision”?
 - d. Who are “the circumcision”?
6. In verse 12, Paul gives us some insight into the spiritual state of “the uncircumcision”
 - a. Paul uses the phrase “were at that time” to describe these people. What is the “that time” he is referring to?
 - b. He again talks about them in the past tense – what “were” they? What does that say about them now?
 - c. What are they “strangers” to?
 - d. What is a covenant? What is the covenant that Paul is speaking of here? (Read Romans 9:4; Genesis 17:1-8)
 - e. Who are these people separated from?
7. In verse 13, Paul brings the hope!
 - a. *But now*...Remember the “but God” from Ephesians 2:4? Here is another use signifying a transition from one thing to another thing. What is the transition?
 - b. They were once...what?
 - c. Now they are...what?
 - d. By...what?
 - e. In...whom?
 - f. Look up and define the word “Christ”.
 - g. Who are we “brought near” to?
8. In verses 14-16, Paul discusses the *peace* that is given to those *in Christ*
 - a. Who is the “he” in verse 14? What does it mean that “he himself” is our peace?
 - b. Who is the “us both”?
 - c. What was demolished?
 - d. What was abolished? (see also Colossians 2:14)
 - e. Why is that necessary?
 - f. Paul says that Jesus is “creating one new man in place of two”. This wording may seem strange, but think back to verse 11 (question 5).
 - i. Who are the two men (people)?
 - ii. Who are these two people in? (what “one man (people)” are they being made into?)
 - g. Look up the word *reconcile*. How are we reconciled to God?
 - h. What is the result of this reconciliation? (Note – this reconciliation is both to God and to others).
 - i. ... to God (read Romans 5:1-11)
 - ii. ... to others (read 2 Corinthians 5:16-20)
9. In verse 17, Paul says that Jesus preached peace to two different people.

- a. Who are “those who are far off”?
 - b. Who are “those who are near”?
10. In verse 18, Paul tells us something about what Jesus is doing for us now
- a. What does Jesus grant to those who are *in Him*?
 - b. Read 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 7:20-24; Hebrews 9:15-18
11. In verse 19, Paul explains the new relationship(s) we have for those *in Christ*
- a. What are we “no longer”? What does that say about who we once were?
 - b. What are we “now”?
 - c. Look at the words Paul uses to describe our “now”. Write them down. There are many ways to summarize these words, but what do these words make you think of?
 - d. How do you feel knowing that the description Paul uses is *only* true of those who, by faith, are *in Christ*?
 - e. Can you claim these promises? On what basis?
12. In verse 20 and 21, Paul compares this “now”, this “household”, to a building
- a. What is the foundation of this building? What does that say about the existence of those groups of people today?
 - b. What is a cornerstone? Who is the cornerstone of the household of God? (Read Acts 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:4-8)
 - c. What holds this “whole structure” together?
 - d. What is it being built into?
13. Finally, in verse 22, Paul connects this to those *in Christ*
- a. What are Christians being built into?
 - b. Are we being built into that one by one or together with other Christians?
 - c. Positionally and relationally, where must we be in order for this to be true?

In Ephesians 2, Paul has shown us a lot about ourselves and a lot about God. He has shown us who we once were (or who we still are if we are not *in Christ*). He has shown us how God brings life to the dead, how God seeks us, and what happens when He finds us.

Have you been found?

Paul writes about how we are found by God, but also about how we are changed by God from one type of being into a completely new type of being. From “one man” into a “new man”. Given that, it’s safe to say that God finds us all in various states of sin and rebellion, some of us are “good people”, some of us are “bad people” – but only according to society because as he writes in Romans...

Romans 3:9–12 (9) What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, **(10)** as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; **(11)** no one understands; no one seeks for God. **(12)** All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” **(ESV)**

... and Jesus also says ...

Matthew 19:16–17 (16) And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” **(17)** And he said to him, “**Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.**” **(ESV)**

... none of us are “good”. And as such, God finds us “not good” and changes us over the course of our lives to be “more good” – not perfect, that happens after we die. But in either case, God finds us in various states of sin and rebellion and *changes us*. He is not content to leave us where we are.

He cares too much for His now adopted children to wallow in their sin...

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, **(10)** nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **(11)** And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. **(ESV)**

Don't see that list of vices as exhaustive, but as representative of all types of sin – sin against the self, sin against others, sin against God, etc.

Such *were* some of you...

...*but you were* washed.

All past tense.

If you are *in Christ*.

Are you *in Christ*?

How do you know?