

Part 2, Blessings of being “in Christ” and “in God”

Light on the Rock

by Philip Shields

Abstract: New Testament writers speak of being “in Christ, in God, in Him, in whom” in practically every chapter of the epistles. This message explains why we need to understand this vital topic of becoming one Spirit with Christ. We cover how closely Yahweh is to His chosen people, how we come to be in Christ, how men and women with God’s Spirit can right now be in our heavenly Father – and much more. We conclude by introducing the topic of our personal “one-on-One” with the Almighty, as part of being In Him.

.....

**(Note for transcript readers: I recommend listening to the audio version of part 2 and 3 because the “transcript” is just a close approximation of what is said. Due to time constraints, though I’ve transcribed this as closely as I can, much has been left out of the transcript, especially in the last half of the message. So I suggest you hear the audio also.)

Greetings, dear brothers and sisters in Christ our Lord. We are continuing this mind-blowing concept of how God’s children are said to be “in Him”, “in God” Himself, and we’re going today to explore more of the blessings that accrue to us as God’s children because we are “in Him”. So if you want a title, it’s simply that: “Part 2, Blessings of Being In Christ and In God”. Be sure you have heard part 1 before hearing this one. I have to confess, I know this subject is far, far bigger than I could even grasp myself right now. But I hope it moves you and excites you to learn more of our high calling.

WHY should you care about this topic of being “in Him”? Because as we began to see last time, and will continue this time:

- unless we are “in Him”, we haven’t even begun the new spiritual life.
- Unless we are in Him, we won’t fully understand the depth of how much we’re forgiven, redeemed or saved. It has to do with understanding being in Him.
- Unless we are in Him, we can’t know God. It’s impossible. Knowing God and Christ is what eternal life is all about, according to Jesus’ own words in John 17:2-3 and it has to do with being in Him.
- Unless we are In Him, we still stand condemned and unjustified – but in Christ we are at peace with God and no longer stand condemned.
- When we’re “in Him”, we are tapped into and a part of, the greatest Life in the Universe – that of God Himself. Do you want your faith, or Christ’s? Your love – or the love of God?
- Plus there will be many, many other reasons to understand “in Him”, as we unfold this topic in this and the next message. So I hope you want to understand this topic and praise God for it when you do.

Being in him won’t happen until we stop being in this world and until we come out of her – meaning Babylon (Rev 18:4). Many of us “go to” church, claim to be Christian, but still love the ways of Babylon too much – it’s values, it’s entertainment, it’s priorities, it’s way. We *are* the church – not so much “go” to church. We won’t have a new life until we die to the old life. *We can’t be resurrected to be in Him until we have buried the old self.* There’s no “new creation” till there is a

declaration and evidence that our old life is past. There is no fruit of God's way until we put in new seed and have new roots, producing a completely new tree of life, a new way, within our bodies.

All this happens when we're "in Him". Now are you seeing why I say this is such an important topic to get our minds wrapped around, and why it is so exciting to me, and I hope will be to you?

Closer than Ever

In the beginning, God created man outside the Garden of Eden, invited him into the Garden of Delights (that's what Eden means), and created man and woman in His image. They were invited into a close relationship with their Creator. God has always wanted closeness with His creation. But papa Adam and Mama Eve goofed up – and so were expelled from the garden, just as surely as you and I would also have been. I've talked about the plan of salvation before and won't elaborate here, except to say this: this time, God is offering the chosen ones, also called "the Elect", something more than just being close to Him. Yahweh is offering the Elect the opportunity to be in Him, while He is also literally in each of the Elect by His Spirit. We are all very familiar with God being in US by the Holy Spirit, but this is about us being in God. Some feel that won't happen until the resurrection, but Paul and Peter are very, very clear that being in God is our present opportunity and present possession.

Last time we saw that the **best way to really get to know someone is to live with them for a while. God gets to know us by living with us—even IN us.** He sees what we see, hears what we hear, and goes where we go – to a point. We know He abides in us by His Spirit (1 John 2:24, etc), and that Jesus says both He and our holy Father come abide in us. He said of those who love Him and obey Him, "My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). So we understand God living in us.

But now we're told by that same spirit, we also abide IN HIM. Being in God is also the best way to get to know God. I showed last time that dozens of scriptures indicate it we are now, in this life, already In Christ and even in God the Father. It's not something that has to wait until the resurrection (1 Cor. 16:24; John 15:1-8; 1 Pet. 5:14; Col 1:2, etc). We know Jesus tells us in John 15 to abide in Him. We know Paul addresses the Thessalonians in 1 Thess. 1:1: "...to the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." In the Father. Right now. The best way to get to know someone is to live with them. So that's what God is doing. God is getting to know us, and we are getting to know Him intimately, by being in each other.

HOW We Come to be in God

Be turning to John 5 now please. Our goal is to be accepted by God the Father and welcomed to enter the House of God, and to *be* the House of God. There is only one outside door into God's House – just as there was only one entrance into the Tabernacle area. Yeshua, Jesus – is that one outside door that allows us into the House of God (Acts 4:12). He is the Door, He is the Way, and He is the Life. It is only in Him that we can come into the House of God. Once we are in the House, we are free to go anywhere we wish in God's House (Romans 5:2) – including into the very Holy of Holies. Again, how? Through the redemptive blood of Jesus, by being in Him.

No one who is guilty or sinful is allowed to live in the Holy House of God or remain in the presence of the Holy Father. We all earned the wages of our works. So how could we possibly be in the

perfect Holy Father? (For that matter, even Jesus was without sin and is and was perfect). The wages of sin is death. We were guilty, we were sinful.

But in Christ, **Romans 8:1** assures us there is no longer any condemnation for those who are in Christ. Why and how? Because we're in Him, and *Jesus* was never condemned by God, Jesus never sinned, Jesus never failed – so was never condemned. When we are in *Him*, Abba sees us also as no longer under any condemnation, for now our Father sees Christ, who is our life.

We also stand uncondemned because our Master took our sin debt and paid the wages of sin by dying for us. 2 Cor. 5:21 says He became sin for us; and perhaps it can also mean He became the sin offering for us. So as a result, we're told at the end of Romans 4:21-25, that just as Abraham believed God and righteousness was imputed to him, God now also bestows His righteousness on us who also believe. Not just Abraham! I've been talking about this for a long time, and this sermon ties it all together!

So as a result, **Romans 5:1-2** goes on to say: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Brethren, are we getting it? In Christ we have been justified – made right, declared just, declared righteous – as if we had never sinned, even though we have sinned. We can't deaven ourselves. It happens only by being in Christ. He is the way, and the only way, into the House of God (Acts 4:12). Once we are in the House of God, we have access anywhere in that house – including to the very Holy of Holies, to the very presence of God the Father Himself – and in fact we can do so boldly.

As the Bride of Christ, He is the one who brings us with Him into the presence of the Father – as we are seen as part of His very own body and considered to be in Christ. Christ is perfect, Christ is acceptable, Christ is sinless – and as part of Him – we now also can come into the Father's presence, and come to be considered actually a part of God the Father Himself. We are said to abide in God Himself, as we shall see. I get so excited about this! I hope you are too!

So what's the process?

We come to be in Him by answering His call to discipleship and making the Eternal the true Lord and Master of our life, 24/7, all the time, everywhere, with every one, in complete and absolute surrender to Him. Many are called – but few become the "Elect", the same Greek word translated the "Chosen". Many are offered the opportunity, are called, but few send back an RSVP and say they are honored to be called and yes, would like to be in the wedding of the Great King.

We have to have our "come to Jesus" moment, literally. Too many want to be Bible scholars, know what the Bible says – but don't care to come to know its Author! Come to know God, and you'll also come to grasp His book. Jesus says most of us start backwards: trying to find life in the Scriptures apart from Him.

John 5:38-40

"But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. [do you and I believe enough to actually live this way?] 39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 *But you are not willing to come to Me* that you may have life."

It is after that where we abide in His word (John 8:31-32) in an obedient life. Someone declared “not guilty”, and is freed from the laws that imprisoned him, is now free to walk the streets – but he now of course must walk obediently. A murderer who was pardoned, and even declared “not guilty”, cannot go out and continue to live a life of crime and murder. So we too, now show we have a new life in Christ by letting Christ live more righteously in us today than we did a few years ago.

The Scriptures should be a living thing. They have power, if we let them change us, but we deny “the power thereof”. Scriptures won’t have any real power in our lives until we come to Jesus personally. I’ll talk more about this when I talk about the one-on-one we have with God.

Right now I’m discussing how we come to be “In God”. After being called, we bow the knee, repent of our attitudes and actions and former way of thinking – and former way of life. We say we’re willing now to completely discard the old way. ***We cannot salvage anything from our old way.*** We can’t clean up the old life enough to say we have somehow qualified for the Kingdom of God. That would be justification by works and we could boast. **In Philippians 3**, Paul said he was blameless, as far as the law went, but considered it all as dung compared to the righteousness of GOD Himself that He could accept in faith, through Christ. Paul said about himself in Romans 7, “I know that there is nothing good that dwells in me, that is, in my flesh”. He says he was CRUCIFIED with Christ. He says HE died to the flesh. The entire old way has to be given up. Entirely. We accept the stricken Rock that is Christ, on our behalf.

Then we’re baptized into the body of Christ, and a consecrated Man of God lays his hands on our heads and asks for God’s Holy Spirit to be given to us. We receive it in faith, believing.

We’re not the ones who actually qualify: Christ qualifies, and we qualify in Him, and only in Him. The Father has qualified us when we put on Christ (read Col. 1:12-14) and accept His redemption for us. Let that sink in. We qualify through Christ and through abiding in Him, and enter in via His righteousness, not our own, for our own righteousness will never be perfect enough.

We let ourselves be led now by His indwelling presence, God’s Spirit. God’s spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ (**1 Cor. 12:13**). Even then though, we have to be faithful to the very end. Look at the ones with Christ when He returns to earth: **Rev. 17:14b** – “...those with him are called, chosen [the elect] and *faithful*.” After all, ultimately the One we hope to be with at that moment is Himself called “Faithful”. (Rev. 19:11; the Faithful and True Witness – Rev. 3:14).

We demonstrate our resolve to walk a new walk by being buried with him in baptism (Rom. 6:1-6), being raised up to a new creation, created by God. If we are “in Christ” we are, right now, a NEW creation – something that had never been before (2 Cor. 5:17). We are not the creators of our own new creation. You can’t make yourself good enough so that God feels compelled to allow you into His Kingdom. It doesn’t work like that.

Now what?

1 Cor. 12:27 says “You are the body of Christ, and members individually”. The “body of Christ” is the church (**1 Tim. 3:15**), and that’s you.

That is one way we are “in Him”, but I believe it is much, much more than *just* being a part of the church of God. Start thinking about being the church, not just going to church. But as part

of the “called out ones” – *ekklesia* – translated “church” – we are part of HIS body. All of the body parts of Jesus have to be holy. Have to be.

Being “in Him” is God’s doing, not ours.

1 Cor. 1:30-31—“*But of Him [God the father] you are in Christ Jesus...*” You can’t make yourself abide in God unless God calls you, you respond, and then after deep repentance and change of mind and heart – you completely surrender to God. You can’t work yourself into it, you can’t earn it. It’s God’s free gift. You will be tempted often by Satan to question whether you are truly in God, or God is in you, especially when you’ve really sinned big time. But repent, get back up into God’s arms, and get back into the fight.

It goes on to say that “Christ *became for us* wisdom from God – and *righteousness* and sanctification and redemption” so that we glory in Christ, not in ourselves. Keep that in mind. Being in God is God’s doing, and it is the righteousness of God that we must have – not our own (Phil. 3:8-11). We can have God’s righteousness by faith (Rom 9:30; 10:3; 4:5-6, 13). God gifts us His righteousness (Romans 5:17,21) if we accept it by faith. We can have by faith something we could never earn. Again – all of this is because of being in Christ, and all of this is because God is working in us. It is His righteousness, His doing. “Of Him, [of God], you are in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1:30).

This is the plus and minus I’ve spoken about. He removes our sins (the minus), and he adds His righteousness (the plus). We were bankrupt spiritually and he pardons our debt, but then places into our account a billion dollars – if I can use that analogy to explain how God takes away our sin and puts in His righteousness, if we believe and accept it by faith. Read it slowly in 1 Cor. 1:30-31.

Would you rather have your own righteousness – or God’s righteousness? “In God”, we can share in His righteousness. His life. His wisdom. We just read it.

You’ll be tempted to question – especially after a big sin – to question whether or not we are still in Christ at that moment. Repent, get back into the fight, and you abide in Christ.

You are Not in the Flesh if you are in Christ

Once we have received the Spirit of Christ, we are no longer our own, we are now in Him (Romans 8:9), and we are not even any longer seen as being “in the flesh, but in the spirit”, though we are still “fleshly”. We now let Christ walk His new walk, His way through us.

Romans 8:8-9

“So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.* Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His”

If the Spirit of Christ – same as the Spirit of God, for there is but one Spirit, one Lord, one God, and so on – if Christ’s spirit is in me, then Abba sees Christ, and His nature, His spirit, His life – and not mine. My own died. My life is now in Christ. My life is now Christ’s life which I’ve taken for myself. Let’s continue reading. I have to accept this by faith and over time Christ and His life will be more and more evidenced in me and you, if He is truly in me and in you. A tree does not have fruit right away, but it takes time. It will take time before Christ is fully seen in us, but it can and will happen – and it starts by faith, believing it is the case, even before we fully see it! Remember it’s the unseen that is at work at first.

One Spirit with Christ

In fact, 1 Cor. 6:17 says that when we have God's spirit, we become one spirit with Christ. "He who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit with Him."

What does "one spirit with Christ" mean? I think we're just scratching the surface. Paul says Adam and Eve picture Christ and the church – that as Eve came out of Adam, and was of Adam, so we are also of Christ. When they came together in sexual intimacy, they became again "one *flesh*", in the same way that we are to be so intimately united with Christ that we are one Spirit with Him. Paul says the whole picture of a godly marriage and being one flesh in marital intimate sexual union is a mystery that speaks of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:30-32).

Are we grasping it? To be in Christ, to be one spirit now with Christ, I don't know if anyone on earth really grasps it totally.

The new life in Christ starts off from what is unseen, as things we do by faith – and by the Spirit. *Spirit is the reality*. Flesh and what we can see is but is only a type of the reality of the Spirit. The new life in Christ starts with what is unseen. This is a huge point. What produces fruit on a tree is from what is unseen – the roots, under the ground. Surely, leaves have their role – but it's the tree, its roots, that really produce the fruit. That's a type of the spiritual. We have to be rooted and grounded in the unseen Christ before anyone sees the fruit, or the results, of God's spirit. Am I there yet myself? Not yet – but I'm learning and in time am confident God will work in me and in you what He has worked in others who believed. The focus has to be on the unseen hand of God and His working in us, and less on our working.

Let's read some of God's word on this:

Colossians 2:6-7

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, *7 rooted and built up in Him* and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."

Unless we are attached to the right roots, and in this case that is King Jesus – we don't stand a chance! Isaiah 37 speaks of the time when Israelites will come back to the land – and notice how they will bear fruit. It applies to us also. It all begins with being in Him, down to the very roots:

Isaiah 37:31

"And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward."

But, very important – it is His working in us. It is the roots of the vine producing the fruit in the branches. We have to be rooted in Him, before we can bear fruit. Remember the parable of the sower and the seeds in the stony ground, which had no root in themselves? That was the problem. Too many of us want it to be our efforts, like the seed in stony ground. We want to be rooted in ourselves. But we'll wither up and die.

But if the branch – you and I – stay in and on the Vine, King Jesus Himself will bear much fruit in us. It is *His fruit*, His righteousness. It's the fruit of *His* Spirit, so it's God doing it – not the fruit of your or my efforts. I'm not saying we don't make any effort to resist or fight sin. I'm just saying we

can't look to our efforts to be what will save us or qualify us. "For it is *God* who works in you, both to will and to do" – Phil. 2:13. We can't "work on" having more love, or having more patience. That's backwards. We need to *work on being in Him*, studying Him, praying to Him – and then *He* does the work in us producing the fruit.

Remember Ephesians 6:10 – we are to "be strong in the Lord and the power of *His* might". We are to "seek the kingdom of God and *its* righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). However, we want to see first, before we can believe we are in Christ and that He is working in us. Jesus tells Thomas and all of us, "Blessed are those who haven't seen, and yet believe." (John 20:29). Don't wait until you think you are exactly Christ-like before you believe you are in Christ and He is in you. Believe and accept now, and it will happen unto you, and me. Even Paul said in his flesh dwelt no good thing (Romans 7) and called himself "wretched".

God put His Spirit which shines in our hearts, into our fleshly, earthen vessels, "***that the excellence of the power may be of God, and not of us***" (2 Cor. 4:6-7). It is GOD who should be the One working His spiritual results in us. As we get stronger and stronger in Him, we have less and less confidence in ourselves. WE begin to better understand Jesus' statements that apart from the Vine, we can do nothing. But in Him, we can do anything and everything (John 15:3-8). The more we see our own weakness and lack, the more we can clearly see His power and His excellence. As John the Baptist said, "I must decrease, and He must increase".

2 Cor. 12:9-10 now becomes clearer. When we are weak, we are strong – in Him. As God says to us, "MY strength is made perfect in [human] weakness...." (verse 9). When the focus is on what we are doing, God's strength cannot be evident. Paul boasted in his infirmities, that the power of God may rest on Him. It's God's doing, all the way through. Jesus is our life.

Very important: neither can we produce more of the Spirit on our own efforts. To receive more, we have to accept the stricken Rock – which pictured Christ (1 Cor. 10:5) – to receive the Holy Spirit the first time. After that, we simply have to ask the Father who will gladly give us more of His Spirit and His nature (Luke 11:12-13), just like Moses was to simply speak to the Rock the 2nd time when they needed more water, which pictured the Holy Spirit (Numbers 20:7-8).

So again: why should we care about being "in GOD"? Well, when we are "in Christ", we are now tapped into the greatest and most perfect life that has ever been lived. Would you rather have your faith, or Christ's faith in you, for example?

As we feed the Spirit of God and God's nature – it will grow in us. But in the meantime we have to starve the things of the flesh we know are wrong. As we starve the things of the flesh, that dies out in us and allows God's way to grow in us.

HOW can SINFUL FLESH AND BLOOD ABIDE IN THE HOLY FATHER?

For people who wonder how mere flesh and blood – full of failures and shortcomings like we have – could possibly be in holy God, remember what we showed last time, remember we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

Let me ask you: what, who is holy? Ultimately it is God who is holy and wherever God is, is holy. Holiness is something God is.

Now let me ask: can dirt be holy? Maybe sometimes you feel like dirt, and wonder how you or I could ever be in perfect, holy God. Can dirty ground be holy? Now stop and consider: Only where GOD is, can something or someone be holy. Remember President Lincoln's comments at the Gettysburg address? "...We cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it..." It sounds good, but only Yahweh can consecrate anything.

Remember Moses at the burning bush? God told him to take off his sandals because the ground he was standing on was holy ground, holy dirt. How? Why? Because God was there. It's not holy now. But if mere dirt can become holy when God is on it and in it, then we – clods from God, made from the DUST of the earth – also become *hagios*, holy ones, saints, now – if God's Spirit is in us. With God's Spirit in us, we become "holy ground", because wherever God is, becomes holy.

The notion that holiness is something we constantly strive to achieve but never quite attain to – is false. God's presence makes something or someone holy. True, we have to value, guard and protect what is God's holy vessel – but God is the One who makes you holy, right now. That's why we are called "saints" – which means "holy ones". *Hagios* in the Greek. Scripture doesn't say we'll become saints, or will be saints – but that we *are* saints right now.

If you question if you can be holy – even if you consider yourself a recipient of the Holy Spirit, let me ask: Can any part of Jesus' body be unholy? Can King Jesus have an unholy elbow, heel or backside? Of course not! Maybe you feel like a heel or an armpit in the body of Christ, as I often do, but nonetheless, if you or I are a part of the body of Christ, it would be a slap in the face of God to say that body part is unholy! Are you a part of the body of Christ? If you have His spirit, you are a part of His body. NO body part of Jesus can be unholy. Including you. Either you are in Christ, and therefore holy, or you are not in Christ – and therefore unholy. It's that simple.

Don't mix being a "saint" with being "sinless". Those are 2 separate topics. But really, when we die to sin and live for righteousness, we are a new spiritual creation. When we sin, Paul says "it is no longer I who did it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:16-17,20). God knows our heart and sees the "new man", the new creation in us. God knows the Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak (Mark 14:38), and so He considers our frame and remembers we are but dust (Ps. 103:13-14). I'm quoting scripture throughout – and I hope you are recognizing this.

God's children now have 2 natures: the sinful dead nature, and the living new heart, new nature from God. The one we feed and nurture and let lead us becomes the dominant nature. These 2 natures produce a constant struggle in us (Gal. 5:16-17) – as we know, every time we are tempted! *Both natures will be with us throughout this life*, until the resurrection when this corruptible shall put on incorruption. We have the old, sinful heart that hates God and God's law (Rom 8:6) – but we also have a new heart that loves God. WE sing "Oh how love I thy law" – and can – now that we have the new heart from God. So God does not see you as being the old you anymore. The old nature, called "the old man" by scripture, is dead in Christ, and in Christ the new you – Christ in you – is what God now sees, if we're seeking Him and abiding in Him daily.

We need to pray David's prayer – "Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10). God is the creator of that clean heart, not we ourselves. One of the meanings of "steadfast" from the Hebrew is "faithful". Let me stay true to you, Oh Elohim.

Just as you could not start your own first birth – but was something done by others – neither can you be the creator of your new creation. God is the only Creator. God is the only source of all life. Period. God is also the one creating in you the new man. You are not the creator of the new man, the new nature – or it won't be a creation of God's power.

Some of you are trying to perfect yourselves and qualify on your own merits. You can't. You and I can and must become perfect, alright, but it can only be done in Christ. Apart from Christ, we can do nothing spiritually, but we can do all things, anything, even greater things than Jesus Himself did (John 14:12) – according to Jesus – when we are in Him.

So how does repentant, but sinful mankind ever come to be in holy God? Through the Door or gate we have, the one door: Jesus Christ (John 10:9). We were baptized into Christ, and have been united with him in His resurrection (Rom. 6:3-6). We discard the old leaven of our old life, all of it, and become a part of the “bread from heaven”, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:16-17). We – though many – are one bread, one body, through Christ. We can't make our old leavened bread – a type of our old carnal life – we can't make it “unleavened” and holy, no matter how hard we try, any more than we can deleaven a loaf of leavened bread. It has to be thrown out and replaced with a truly unleavened *matzah* or unleavened bread.

So we're asking how we can end up in Holy God, as sinful as we still often are. Jesus is clear He is in the Father. Please be turning to Colossians 3. It's through the one Door, Jesus Christ.

As you turn there, remember a key point to make: Jesus had said in John 14 that “**...I am in the Father** and the Father is in Me...” (John 14:10-11; John 17:21). Father was in Jesus, and Jesus was in Father – so perfectly, they are considered One, but they were two separate personalities.

If we are now in Christ, we are still separate beings from Jesus, but also seen as in Him, a part of Him. We are part of Christ, where He is, doing what He does. It is *through* Jesus Christ that we are covered by His perfect life. In Christ, we are then seen as righteous and holy and can boldly come before Holy Abba, our Father, because now Father sees Christ's righteousness covering us, and not our own. ***Christ's life is now our life, if we would just accept that in faith.*** Now let's read it! Sometimes you have to accept by faith that which you cannot yet see. We cannot yet see our own perfection, but that's because we still also have the other, old nature. But in faith believe Yeshua – JESUS the Anointed – is now your real life that God sees.

Remember we already read in 1 Cor. 12:13 that we are baptized into the body of Christ by God's spirit. We become a part of the body of Christ. Remember that no part of Christ's body can be unholy. Impossible. Either you're a part of Christ – and holy – or not a part of Christ.

Colossians 3:2-4

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For *you died*, and *your life is hidden with Christ in God*. 4 When *Christ who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

Verse 3 again: how do we get to be in God the Father? It says we died, but right now we are hidden *with Christ in God*. We are in Christ, who is in God the Father – and so we get to be in God the Father through Jesus' holy and perfect, sinless life. He's the way. He's the life. He's the door. He's it! If I could be in God the Father apart from Christ, then we wouldn't

need Christ. "If righteousness could be achieved by keeping the law, then Christ died in vain" (Gal. 2:21 – read it!).

So again, we have our lives "hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Did you catch how we come to be "in God"? How? In and through Christ.

Christ is in the Father, we are in Christ now, so we too are now also not just in Christ, but in God the Father Himself, THROUGH Jesus Christ's perfect, sinless life.

Col. 3:3 doesn't say we will someday, maybe, be "in God". No, it says right now, because of Jesus, and being a part of His body, we are "hidden with Christ in God". One more thing: since God's very own righteousness is gifted to those who will accept it in faith, as I've covered so many times before, we are seen – through Christ – as being holy and clean and also able to be in God. That is much more than just saying we are "in the church" and therefore in Christ. It's much deeper than that.

Paul acknowledged that in 1 Thess 1:1 and **2 Thess 1:1** – "...to the **Thessalonians in God the Father** and the Lord Jesus Christ..." Let's turn now to 1 John 4 and see what it has to say to us about also being in GOD Himself, and not just being in Christ. We are "inscribed on the palms of His hands" (Isa. 49:16). My children – all three of them, plus even the one who died – are always in my heart. Always. They're always in me – though they have lives of their own. Perhaps through Christ, in some mystical way, we are also in the Father, always, all the time.

1 John 4:12-16

"No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and *he in God*. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and *he who abides [present tense] in love abides in God*, and God in him."

"He who abides in love *abides in God*, and God in him" – and it says we abide in Him (1 John 4:13-16). God also gifts us with His righteousness. That's the only way we can possibly ever be in God the Father – by His own righteousness that covers us, and through Jesus' covering life.

Now let's start looking at more of the benefits and blessings we have now due to being in Christ. Be turning to Romans 8.

Because I am in Christ, anything happening to me, and in me, and at me – get this – anything happening to me is first happening in and through Christ, and is with His complete and total awareness, knowledge, and in His control. So when we pray, and we think what we're saying doesn't even make any sense, the Spirit of Christ is praying for us and in us and making sense of it all – long before we are even aware of what is really going on. We all know Romans 8:28 by heart – how all things work together for good for those who love God. But do we as often tie Romans 8:28 to the 2 verses before it, and which have everything to do with explaining how and why all things work together for good for those in Christ:

Romans 8:26-29

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. *27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints* according to the will of God.
 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

What God inspired Paul to teach is so deep, so profound, that I don't think most of us – including me – have begun to scratch its depth. Add to what we just read, the fact that God says He is aware of our needs long before we are (Matthew 6:8). In fact, long before we become aware of something being planned against us, God is already dealing with it – whether a cancer or an office politics controversy – anything. It could be that you're about to be laid off and don't know it. God knows, and He's already dealing with it, because it is also happening in and to Christ. That's why Jesus asked Paul “why are you persecuting ME?”, as Paul hurt Christians, who were in Christ, parts of His body (Acts 9:3-4)

So the Spirit is already praying to the Father for and with us long before we have the full picture of what's going on in our lives. It doesn't matter if the house has burned down, if there's stage 4 cancer, or whatever. All things work together for those who are the Called and who love God. That should be us. I don't fully understand how the Spirit does this, but I can accept by faith what scripture says here. And I love it. [There's more on the audio than I can put down word for word in the transcript here]

So when I am in Christ, nothing can happen to me that God and King Jesus aren't long aware of, long before I know there is even a problem. Now that's a blessing of being in God and Christ.

Because if it's about to happen, or is already happening, it is happening to God and in God directly – and He feels very personally what people do to you and me, and what we're feeling, and how we're thinking. All because we are “in Him”. That should make you want to start to sing and dance and praise God with mighty “hallelujahs”, dear brethren. I think the meaning of “in Him” is far deeper than just saying we are in Him because we attend a certain church.

God's Spirit is talking to God for us, about us, even when we're all upset perhaps, wondering what on earth is going on. God knows what we need before it happens, and long before we ask. Then of course our human reasoning begins to wonder why God “isn't doing anything”. But just because we can't see everything going on doesn't mean God isn't doing anything.

God knows our real battles are not the things we see, but the things we can't see. When things are going on around us, the real battles being waged are in spiritual high places (Ephesians 6:12) against spirit forces we can't even see.

Brethren, so get this: it is absolutely crucial that we be in Christ to have any chance of spiritual survival in these spiritual battles. God is aware that our real battle is a spiritual one – not the physical issues we see right now.

PEACE WITH THIS AWARENESS: I think if I was more aware of being in Him, **moment by moment**, I'd be happier, more at peace, certainly more obedient and faithful. Romans 5:1-2 says so! We are justified and now have peace! We are now the vessel holding God's presence. Remember Jesus asleep in the boat and totally at peace in a storm (Mark 4:35-41)? He's so not worried, that He

is asleep – but He's in the boat. And He's in us, and this time He never sleeps or slumbers for He is in heaven managing the universe.

Well, *we're* the boat! And the waves are crashing around us. But we have God in us as much as that boat did. But we are alive and have senses, and we should be growing in our ability to handle “the stuff of life” better as time progresses – knowing that anything happening to me is happening to Jesus, and He is aware of it, knows what to do, and I don't need to worry. If only I could practice that perfectly now. I know, the flesh is still there, and it's weak.

If we become more aware of this being in Him moment by moment, I think we will be more alert to purge everything from our lives that are unholy. We will more readily turn our back on a life of sin. *If you really could really SEE God right there with you, in you, beside you – would we talk and act and live the way we often do, falling short of the mark? If we really understood this concept, surely we'd be less easily swayed by sin, vanities, feeling hurt and slighted, giving in too easily to temptations and pulls of the flesh – or is it just me who has these kinds of temptations?*

If we really understood God is in us, not just with us – would we lose our temper so easily? Would we look at things we shouldn't? Would we so easily give in to sin?

Branches in Him, the Vine

We are branches on the Vine, which is Jesus (**John 15:1-8**). What is a branch's function? Isn't it to bring glory to the Vine by producing fruit by and through the vine? Everything the branch – that's us – possesses, really comes from, and belongs to, the Vine. I've never said “what a beautiful branch”. I have said, “What a beautiful tree” – when all the branches do their part. The individual brethren are the branches – “YOU are the branches”. It's not doctrinally correct to claim organizations are the individual branches.

God gives Himself completely for us, and we give ourselves completely for Him. The branch bears fruit only as it abides in the Vine. We can't ultimately be a good witness for King Jesus if we start trying to do it on our own. The branch bears fruit for the good of others. The more fruit it produces, the lower the branch hangs – depicting true humility when we realize apart from the Vine – Jesus Christ – we can bear no fruit. With the Vine, we can bear much fruit and bring glory to the father. John 15:1-8 says all of that.

Blessings of being “in Him” include – in John 15 – that we will be able to bear MUCH fruit, and also that our prayers will be more powerful. Jesus says in **John 15:7**, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you will and it shall be done for you”. That's a promise I want to live by. As we abide in Christ, we can use Jesus' name with power, and conviction, and freely – with awesome result. But we have to abide – remain in, rest in – Him.

Abiding in Christ results in Christ living through us the way He lived on the earth before – obediently. WE will also be keeping God's commands and laws.

First we abide – then we can properly obey, because now it is Jesus' life living obediently and not our own life. Being in Him is what causes fruit, causes obedience, causes us to keep His word. Let's not get the cart before the horse. We abide in His love, IF we keep His commandments (John 15:10). Brethren – we are not to just accept Jesus once in our lives – but once we accept Him as our

Savior, we are to abide, stay and remain in Him. We are make Him our abode, our habitation. We aren't supposed to come and go from Christ, but to stay and abide in Him.

1 John 2:3-6

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 ***But whoever keeps His word,*** truly the love of God is perfected in him. ***By this we know that we are in Him.*** 6 ***He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.***" (also note 1 John 2:24-25)

1 John 3:4-6

"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. 6 ***Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.***"

1 John 3:24

"Now ***he who keeps His commandments abides in Him,*** and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us." (also note 2 John 9).

We will in this life always have our sinful, carnal nature. But when we are deeply abiding in Him, the new nature gets stronger and bigger in us and crowds out the old sinful nature more and more. I am coming to see more and more that we will be stronger against sin, and when we do slip up, God sees the intent of our heart and recognizes, as Paul says in Romans 7:17,20, that "it is no longer I who sinned, but the sinful nature within me that did it." That wasn't the new self sinning, but the old self.

But the closer we are to truly abiding in Him, the more dominion we will have over sin. That is another reason to really want to be in Him, and to abide in Him. To make HIM our ABODE, our HOME. Those who continue in a life of sin do not know Him and do not abide in Him.

OUR OWN ONE-ON-ONE WITH HOLY GOD

Most of the time, to really let the old self die and become "in Him", we have to first have our own dramatic one-on-One with God.

It's our own personal confrontation of self and God. I define the "one on One" moment, as when you feel and know God is trying to get your attention – and it's very personal. You know He wants you, and wants your full attention now. It's often emotional, because it's like God personally looks at you, taps you on the shoulder – or more – and says, "come follow me -- now." Sometimes God has to tell us to give up our old way several times. We're dull of hearing perhaps, or hard headed. Peter was called to leave his nets and he immediately dropped the nets and followed Jesus (Matthew 4:18-20). That was one moment of one-on-one. Later, in the episode of catching so many fish that the boat almost sank, Peter sees himself and says, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). Then as Jesus was being scourged, another moment – when their eyes locked, right after he had denied Christ 3x (Luke 21:60-61) – and Peter went out and wept bitterly. Then after the crucifixion, he went back to his old job of fishing (John 21:2-5) and Jesus had to tell them again that He had bigger "Fish" to go after. He had to call them back to shore. He tells Peter, at the end of the book – "Follow ME." (John 21:22). After that, another one-on-one – when the King asks Peter, and

you and me – “Do you agape [love] Me?”. You bet that was a one-on-One moment. Read it again in John 21:15-19, where Jesus ends that session with another “Follow ME”.

Being in Him means abiding in Him. Means we remind ourselves to follow HIM, all the time. It's God's doing, not ours. It's living Jesus' life now – and not ours. It's seeking His will, and not ours. It's living for Him, and not for ourselves. It's also about having HIS spirit, His love, His wisdom and yes – His righteousness. And it's about being the body of Christ, a holy part of the very body of the Savior. ALL of it is God's doing.

We'll wrap this up in the next message.
Until next time, God be with you – and continue to abide in Him.

Philip Shields

.....