

**THE CHRISTIAN AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

1 John 5:9-12

**Intro:** It might sound strange to announce as the subject of a message, “The Christian and the Lord Jesus Christ.” And yet you would be surprised at the number of times I have asked people to explain to me what a Christian is, and to have them answer that question without saying anything about the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet we must all readily admit that there would be no Christians if it were not for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word “Christian” is only used three times in the NT, and not at all in the OT. You will find it twice in the book of Acts (11:26; 26:28) and once in 1 Peter 4:16, but it was not in use to any great degree until about 150 years after Christ. It seems to have originated from the combined ministries of Paul and Barnabas in the city of Antioch of Pisidia. Wuest says that it was a term to describe those who were worshipers of Christ as compared with those who worshiped the Caesars. The lexicons explain it as meaning *a follower of Christ*. Agrippa’s use of it may indicate that it was not a very complimentary term. But whatever may be the truth about it, it identified those who were followers of Christ. Today it has been stretched beyond any real meaning at all. In my earlier days it was almost synonymous with being an American. It usually means a person who goes to a church which historically, at least, has claimed to believe the Bible. It obviously has much to do with Christ, and should mean a person who believes in Jesus Christ, one who lives by His teaching, and, as it is sometimes defined, *one who belongs to Jesus Christ*.

In our text the Apostle John was describing those who have eternal life. A Christian, then, a true Christian, is one who has eternal life. This life is in God’s Son. We have this life if we have God’s Son. If we don’t have God’s Son, we don’t have eternal life.

So you can see that the Apostle John was eliminating all other religions, all other beliefs. Eternal life is a gift from God, and it is to be received only in God’s Son.

I want to call your attention to the statement at the end of verse 11: “This life is in His Son.” If God gives us eternal life, and “this life is in His Son,” the Lord Jesus Christ, then it means to have life is to have Christ. The eternal life that we have as Christians means that we have life because we have Christ.

And so we have the Apostle Paul saying, “Christ liveth in me.” See Gal. 2:20. To be a Christian then is to have Christ. He actually comes and lives in us. When Paul was writing to the church at Colosse he told the believers there that Christ in them was their certain hope of glory. See Col. 1:27. And later in that same epistle, in chapter 3 Paul spoke of our being “risen with Christ,” that our lives are hidden “with Christ in God.” And then he went on to say, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:4). The phrase “in glory” are not just another way of saying *in heaven*, but they speak of the goal of our salvation, to be like Christ. Such a goal would be utterly impossible if it were not for the amazing fact that Christ is living in us as a very real, personal presence.

When our Lord met with Martha after the death of her brother, the Lord told her, “Thy brother shall rise again” (John 11:23). She responded by saying that she knew that he would rise again at the last day. And then the Lord introduced this great truth to her in words which probably most of us have committed to memory. Listen to what He said:

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (John 11:25-26).

I don’t think that Martha got the real meaning of what the Lord said to her if we are to judge by her response. She said:

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world (John 11:27).

I am not being critical of Martha because I think that most of us have trouble taking this great truth into our hearts. Jesus Christ is not only the One through Whom God gives us life, *but He is our life!* God’s gift of eternal life to us is the gift of His Son. Every person who is a true child of God is indwelt by the living Son of God.

When the Lord Jesus was praying the prayer that is recorded for us in John 17, He touched upon this theme in verse 23 where we read that He prayed,

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

The religions of the world have nothing like this. In fact, the religions of

the world encourage people to worship gods which are non-existent! God has given to us, His people, life, eternal life, because He has given to us His Son “Who is our life.”

According to the Gospel of Matthew, the last words of the Lord Jesus Christ before in His body He ascended back to the Father were these: “And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20b).

Now all of this is not a denial of the omnipresence of the Lord Jesus Christ, an attribute of all of the Members of the Godhead. He dwells completely in every believer on the face of the earth, yet He Himself is seated at the right hand of the Father, and at the same time is present everywhere with no limitations.

Now it takes time for this truth to become a reality to us. It is so different from the way many people think when they think about what it means to be a Christian. And consequently their idea of the Christian life are very different from what they should be. We are not left alone to try to please God in our own strength while He stands by ready to help us when things get too difficult to us. All of it from the very beginning is too difficult for us. We need Him constantly. He is our wisdom. He is our strength. Our purity of life is in Him. The Lord said as much when he was with His disciples on the way to Gethsemane. He told them, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Paul wrote from his confinement in Rome, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

Now this does not mean that we can ignore the commandments of Scripture. It doesn't mean that we do not need to pray to the Father. But it means that the Lord Jesus Christ is our life, empowering us, changing us, restraining us, blessing and using us. It is all a part of what He meant when He said that no one can pluck us out of His hand.

So meditate of those two verses especially: 1 John 5:11 and 12:

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

(Explain.)

Now let me ask you to turn with me to another passage which states this

same truth, but in a slightly different way. It is in 2 Cor. 5, verses 14 through 17. (Read and explain.)

Not only is Christ in us, but we are in Christ! The NT teaches us that when Christ died, we died in Him; when He was buried, we were buried; when He arose, we arose; and when He ascended we, too, were seated with Him in heavenly places.

Christ is in us, and we are in Christ. And that union was determined before foundation of the world. It was secured at the Cross. And it became a reality to us when we were born from above. The result: we are new creatures, or a new creation, in Christ. And so everything is different now in our lives. A person who claims to be a Christian, but has not been changed by a relationship with Jesus Christ – such a person does not understand what it means to be a Christian. A Christian is a person who has been made a new creation by the new birth. And old things have passed away, and all things have become new *because of Christ! Christ has come to dwell in that person's heart.* Nothing less than this is salvation.

But now let me make two practical applications before I close. The first is found in John 15; the second is in Eph. 3. These two chapters are two among many others that emphasize this great truth that we have been talking about tonight.

In John 15, especially the first 11 verses, we have the practical emphasis of the truth of 1 John 5:11 and 12. In fact, haven't those of you who have been memorizing 1 John been reminded time and time again of the Lord's words in the Gospel of John. The Apostle John could be called *the Apostle of fellowship with God.* He obviously was listening with his heart on those occasions when the Lord was teaching all of the apostles.

He is talking about our response to the fact that Christ is living in us. We need to act upon the truth that Christ is living in us, and we in Him. And it has to do with prayer (v. 7), and it has to do with obedience (v. 10). (Explain.)

Now please turn to Ephesians 3, and here I call your attention to Paul's prayer at the end of the chapter beginning with verse 13.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” is not a kind of wishing

will make it so, but Paul meant by those words that we need to believe that Christ is in us, and take full advantage of what that can mean in our daily walk with the Lord. (Read and explain the prayer.)

The Christian life is an impossible life, if all we have to live it are our own resources. Christ would never have come to save us if there had been any other way that we could be saved. And, along the same line, Christ would not be dwelling in us if there were any other way that we could possibly live a life that would please Him, a life of holiness, a life lived to please Him.

May God make these truths a spiritual reality in our lives as we seek to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).