

Week 1: Who We Are In Christ

INTRODUCTION

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

Ephesians 1:3

"I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come."

Ephesians 1:18-21

1. Original Design for Creation

- The garden was created by a genius and has been cared for by fools.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' ""You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Genesis 3:1-13

- Jesus came to restore our original design

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

1 Corinthians's 15:21

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which has been lost."

Luke 19:9

- Renew us to our rightful place

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus

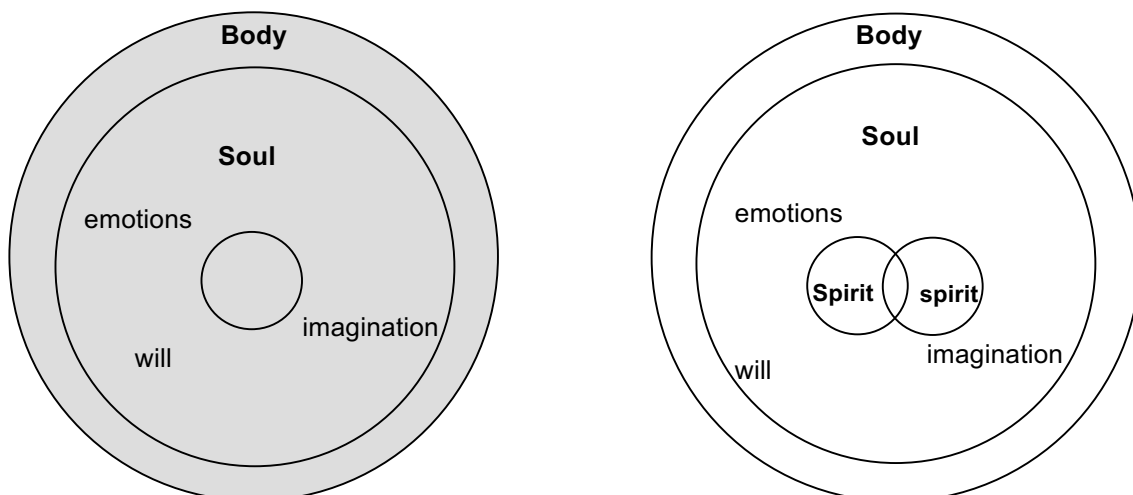
Ephesians 2:6

2. Our Original Design

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

John 17:14-16

Christ in You



As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:1-5

- Paul uses the phrase 'in Christ' 86 times (he uses in Him, many more)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-4

- We will only grasp our identity if we truly believe who we are in Christ.

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Romans 8:9-10

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27

But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:17

3. How to live in Christ and why we fail to live in our inheritance

1. Know 'who you are':

- a. Know what's yours: it's in the word (use the birth right card)

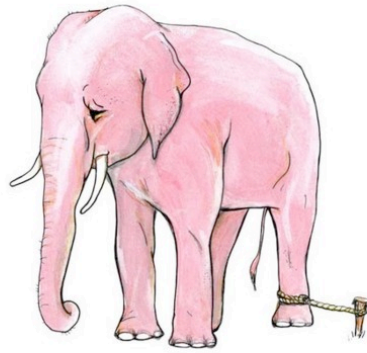
2. Believe it – the righteous live by faith:

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:4

- a. What you believe of yourself defines who you are and controls what you will become.

- b. An enemy of faith is unbelief – which is often rooted in memory



3. Agree with it:

- a. Declare it aloud repeatedly. Trust the Spirit to release it. Walk in it.

4. Do not listen to:

- a. Your flesh
b. The devil/the spirits (anger, fear, rejection, etc.).
c. Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less

5. Persevere!

But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

Luke 8:15

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:13-17

GROUPWORK

1. Introduce one another, and briefly tell your story of how you came to be a Christian.
2. What areas of the teaching this evening were new, what areas have you heard before?
3. Previously, what did you think it meant to be "in Christ" and to have Christ "in you". What is your understanding now?
4. What do you make of the fact that we are supernatural beings (a spirit, with a soul, in a body) – does this make sense?
5. How do you feel when you don't see things happening, does it discourage you?
6. Before you finish, take a moment to individually look at the birth right card and find one statement you are happy to say about yourself aloud (remember the warnings of false humility). Pray together as a larger group and as part of that give time for each person to thank God for that individual promise – either speaking them out in turns, or aloud together as a group.

HOMEWORK

Where do you feel that you are weak in your identity in Christ – e.g. do you feel:

- Powerless?
- Insecure?
- Alone?
- Unclean?
- Lacking in Joy?

Go to the scriptures (possibly using the birthrights cards) and seek one or two scriptures that personally speak into your own heart situation. Write them out in a journal inserting your name into the scripture, for example "Joe is seated in the heavenly realms"

Having done this:

- A) Meditate and mull on the scripture allowing its meaning and its power to sink into your heart.
- B) Ask God for an image that reinforces the meaning of the scripture.
- C) Begin to thank God for, and declare the truth of, the scripture: gently encourage your soul it to believe the truth of the Word of God.