

## The Church, God's Plan for this Age: Who We Are In Christ

Ephesians 1:1-3

May 31, 2020

In today's message, we will learn who we are in Christ.

1. Paul, a Dramatic Example of the Power of Christ to Transform a Life – “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God” (1a).
  - a. Paul's Life Before Christ:
    - i. He was born a Jew and named “Saul” after the first king of Israel.
    - ii. He was trained to be a Pharisee under the rabbi, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
    - iii. He was the most zealous proponent of Judaism in his day.
      1. Galatians 1:14 “And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.”
    - iv. He was one of the most zealous opponents of Christianity in his day.
      1. Acts 8:3 “As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house and haling men and women committed them to prison.”
      2. Acts 9:1-2 “And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.”
  - b. Paul's Life After Christ:
    - i. He was converted in route to destroy the church in Damascus (Acts 9:4-6).
    - ii. He was commissioned to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Galatians 1:15-16).
    - iii. He was an apostle, one sent to the Gentiles.
    - iv. Christ has the power to transform His chief opponents into His chief proponents!
  - c. Christ has commissioned every believer also (Matthew 28:19-20).
2. Ephesian Believers, a Reminder of Who We Are in Christ – “to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus” (1b).
  - a. We are saints!
    - i. We are “set apart ones,” “holy ones,” or “sanctified ones”
    - ii. We've been made holy by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:10, 14).
  - b. We are believers!
    - i. We are “full of faith” in Christ.
    - ii. We are set apart by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).
  - c. We are recipients of God's grace and peace (2)!
    - i. Grace is God's unmerited favor which we receive by faith.
    - ii. We receive peace with God when we receive God's grace by faith.
      1. Christ made peace with God on our behalf (Ephesians 2:4).
      2. When we are at peace with God, we can experience the peace of God.
        - a. Philippians 4:6-7 “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which paseth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
        - b. Psalm 119:165 “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”

### Conclusion:

1. Has Christ transformed your life? If he has, are you living as a missionary to the lost around you?
2. How do you view the opponents of Christ?
3. Has Christ made you holy? Are you striving after righteousness, or are you resting in Christ's righteousness?
4. Do you have peace with God by receiving His grace by faith? Is your soul at peace today?