

God's salvation is a gift, and once we receive this salvation, we should begin to see everything in life as a gift—even our faith. This immense gratitude allows us to stop boasting and rest in who Christ is. Paul says we can experience a life of faith and rest in grace.

Contrast some times you've felt grateful versus when you've felt entitled/owed.

Paul preempts Greek, and other, human arguments by reminding them of their identity, salvation by God's grace alone, and that God has already done a sanctifying work in their hearts. Paul explains that if you already have a relationship with Jesus (as the Messiah), you are "complete" in Him and don't need anything else.

- You don't need to get circumcised; you already ARE in Christ.
- The law has no claim on you because it was fulfilled in Jesus' work.

This is why Paul's main point is about our identity, reminding us that we are "in Him."

What do you think it means to be "in Him"?

1. **Our Identity: In Christ** – Gal 3:26-28 *for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*

To be "baptized into Christ" means to be identified with Christ; we leave our old life and old identity behind and embrace new life in Him. No amount of self-cleansing can make us pure enough to warrant forgiveness and a relationship with a holy God, but when we receive His sacrifice on our behalf, He switches accounts with us. He exchanges our list of sins for His perfect account that is totally pleasing to God and we are found fully claimed, by Him.

What would change in your daily life if you meditated on being "in Christ"?

2. **Our Identity: Dead but Made Alive** – Col 2:13 *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him...*

Nothing can lay a claim upon us but Jesus Himself. When we trust Jesus, we are made alive and have been delivered from the curse; we rejoice in the forgiveness of all trespasses and the canceling of debt. Paul is saying that for those of us who believe that the record of debt has been canceled in Christ, we are now *IN* Christ—we get life. It is not that we paid off the debt; Jesus canceled the record of debt, so that those who trust in Christ are made righteous.

Are there places where you struggle to trust you are completely forgiven?

3. **Our Identity: His Triumph, His Victory, Given to Us** – Col 1:15 *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

Paul makes this victorious line about our freedom. Jesus has triumphed over "rulers and authorities" and presented them open to shame (meaning they are exposed in light of who He is). Paul is saying your life doesn't have to be controlled by them; **"remember who you are first."** He is talking about our lives and identity in Christ.

Who are you "in Christ"? Take some time to remind each other (in your group) of your Gospel identity. Speak the good news of what it means to be in Him into one another's lives.

We really can walk in victory; it is why Paul talks about his previous way of life and now his freedom in Christ. That is our new identity: IN CHRIST.