



From and In

Ephesians 1: 1 NIV

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Have You Considered Your Location?

Although our key verse today is rather straight forward and simple to understand, there are some beautiful implications found in it that will encourage you. **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:** (Ephesians 1: 1 NIV) Paul identifies himself as an apostle which means someone who is sent out, a person given a mission. Like Paul, you too have been given a mission, a calling that is uniquely yours. We shall discuss that on another day, but what must be noted is that he goes out from Jesus Christ which is a better way of translating this. The base camp for Paul was Christ. Another way to put it is that Paul came out of Christ Jesus like a Tesla comes out of its factory or a dentist comes out of dental school, a butterfly comes out of its chrysalis, or an infant comes out of her mother. You are made in Christ and it is from Him you enter into the world as a child of God. Consider this equivalent statement later in Ephesians. **For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.** (Ephesians 2:10 NIV) You are forged in Christ Jesus, you come out of Him which means it is in Him you are made. You literally are a child of God when you have been born again. As one created in Christ Jesus, you have an infinite measure of God's qualities available to you. You alone decide how much of Christ you access today in your endeavors.

There is much to say there, but we are going to focus in on what it means to be in Christ Jesus. You are called a saint in Christ Jesus and that is a precious declaration. Saint is the translation of the Greek word "hagios", which means one separated from common use, pure and righteous due to its purpose. It originally had to do with what was prepared for use in the Temple of God. This included the altar, the golden candle holders, the gold tools, and plates for presenting the offerings. Thus, the hagios or saint was anyone dedicated to God and wholly His. Hagios is the term used to identify the Christian and thus "in Christ Jesus". The idea here is that you are nestled within Christ Jesus, that you belong in Him because you are made for that very purpose. Another way to put it is that you are dedicated by God for this very reason to live in Jesus. This is a complicated concept but hopefully with a few illustrations, the gist of this can be clear.

When Noah and his family went in the ark, the drama of the great flood kept them within. There was in fact no where to go. The Lord ordered all the windows and doors shut so that they would survive the coming deluge. Despite the immensity of the Ark and all the chores required in caring for the creatures inside, there had to have been moments when the family members longed for fresh air and the sight of the sun, moon, and stars above. Yet, they stayed within and did not try to wiggle free. During this time, the family learned the value of God's protection. They felt it each day the rain fell and even as the water began to seep away,

Noah and His family relied upon the ark to hold them safely above the flood. One of the great, unheralded benefits of being in Christ is the comfort we have in His protection. Notice this wonderful promise of how being in Christ protects you. **And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 4:7 NIV) He guards our minds from depression and anxiety, anger, and despair when we rest in Christ. He keeps us from making terrible career moves, bad relational decisions, and grievous financial mistakes when we are in Him. That does not mean we won't suffer hardship or struggle with trials and temptations, but in Christ we have the wisdom of God to shine the way for us. I had a friend who had the opportunity to invest with someone in a business deal and although she didn't have any reason to be suspicious, she felt the Lord telling her to back out of the arrangement. God saved her from financial ruin by whispering in her ear. Being in Christ means you have the supernatural insight of your Savior guiding you and protecting you.

Many would wonder what benefit there was to Joseph languishing in prison his entire young adult life. Being in that prison was like a death sentence to his youth. Yet, he was in there with God the entire way. Joseph learned how to listen to God's voice, how to know what He was saying. Joseph developed patience and the skill needed to work with difficult people and how to deal with those wielding power over him. It was in fact the perfect training ground for a shepherd boy to gain the skills needed to become God's force within the Egyptian kingdom. Not only that, he never would have gained the confidence of the king's cupbearer which opened the way for him becoming second in command of Egypt if he were contentedly herding sheep in Palestine. Sometimes we wonder what God is doing with us and yet when we are in Christ, we have the assurance that He has a plan for us that is perfect in every way. Christ is working out even the tough parts of your life for your good and in the end you will be thankful for what they achieved for you. My friends in college thought it was odd for me to decide to go to seminary in New Orleans when they all believed the one in Texas was much better. However, I never would have met my wife in Texas and the four children our marriage produced wouldn't be here if I didn't go to school in New Orleans. Being in Christ has its advantages.

Numerous times the Gospel writers record the Disciples going out with Jesus in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. Mark tells of Jesus having them hop in the boat one evening to go across the lake. As they moved out into the middle of the lake, a large storm hit and the waves started breaking over the boat, threatening to swamp it. Terrified, the Disciples shook Jesus awake in the back of the boat and cried out to Him, "Don't you care if we drown?" This was of course an odd accusation, one often repeated by people all over the world. "God, don't you care about me?" "Lord, aren't you concerned?" "Jesus, what are you doing?" Perhaps you've felt that same way! I know I have. Jesus patiently got up and told the waves and wind to stop. Turning to the Disciples, Jesus asked them why they were so afraid. "Do you still have no faith?"

Jesus got the Disciples in the boat and the Father let the storm rage so they would learn about the faith Christ Himself had. It was a laboratory as such, an opportunity to watch Christ deal with stress. This was a critical learning experience for the Disciples, but perhaps not for the reasons you think. Jesus wasn't showing off His faith so the Disciples would try it out at home. He wanted them to see exactly how faith would look like for them when He became a part of them. God's own faith was about to enter into them in a supernatural transformation of their personalities and they needed to know just how big it was and how far it could carry them. Several months ago I was at the Apple store getting my phone repaired. While waiting, one of the trainers gave a demonstration on how the new iPhone camera would work. He picked me out from the crowd and asked me if I wanted to come closer to join the group. I shook my head, "No". I had discovered that I could not do any of the cool tasks because my phone wasn't new enough, so it was pointless watching. However, God had me there for a reason because just a few months later I had the same phone the instructor was using. Now, the training was relevant to me because I possessed what was needed to do cool things with my own phone.

When you are in Christ, Christ is also in you. Listen carefully to this promise Jesus has made to you. **Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.** (John 14:19-20 NIV) With Christ in you, all of His qualities become available to you. His faith, His peace, His patience, and His inner strength are there for you to use as you go through the day. The problem you have is that you forget Christ is a part of you and you need to recalibrate who you are. Practice this three-step rule each time a key moment in your day arrives. As you wake up, when you have breakfast, at lunch, in the evening at dinner and just as you are about to fall asleep, recalibrate. Affirm: Jesus is your Savior. Just say it. "Jesus, you are my Savior and you have remade me. I have you within " Adjust. Let Christ know you want Him to live through you. "Lord, give me your peace and wisdom so I can apply them to my life." Acquire. Take a moment to let Christ work His way into you. Softly breathe and give time for God's Spirit to fill you to overflowing. Accept His joy and faith and insight and strength as yours and start back into your day. You don't have to live stressed or frustrated or upset. Let the peace and joy of Christ take over and be free.