

Title: What Do the Words “In Christ” Mean?

Scripture: I Peter 5:14

Speaker: Vic Redding

Event: Sunday Morning Service

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I Peter 5:14 *“Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”*

What does it mean to be “in Christ”? First we must talk about what it means to be out of Christ. All of us are born out of Christ. Romans 3:23 says *“for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* All of us are born in sin and until we give our hearts over to God, we will remain in sin. God knows everything about every man, woman, boy, and girl. No matter how good you are, you are never good enough outside of Christ. The apostle Peter closes with the phrase “all that are in Christ Jesus.” He is revealing a great truth here – all that will be accomplished will be because of God. We try to justify our efforts and appease God, but they won’t. You can come to every single church service and attend faithfully but still be lost. Martin Luther once said: *“I am more afraid of my own heart than I am the Pope and his cardinals.”* If more people would search their hearts they would be afraid too. Their hearts are filled with nothing but sin. When we’re outside of Christ, we are lost and aren’t going to Heaven. If we want the gift of life we have to go to the one who provides it and that is God. To be in Christ means that we have accepted the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for our sins. That he made the payment for sin and shed his own blood for us. II Corinthians 5:21 *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”*. No one else could have taken our place.

What does it really mean to “in Christ”? If there’s a distinct difference, what is it?

1. **It means a changed life:** II Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* Does your family have to guess whether you’re a Christian or not or do they notice a change? Is the change distinct enough to show others that there was a change in you? Acts 11:26 *“And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”* Christ dwells in you and you in him. He is the source of your life and all that you do reflects that fact.
2. **It means a disciplined life:** Luke 9:23 *“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”* There’s no stipulation on who can serve Christ. Christ spoke in the book of Luke to ALL. He said if ANY man follow me. According to the Vine’s Green dictionary, the word disciple means “a learner; one who follows another’s teachings. Disciple means an imitator of their children. When it comes to Christ, we should be an imitator of Him. There are a few questions we must ask ourselves:
 - a. Who or what has your attention?
 - b. Who or what has your heart?
 - c. Who or what consumes your every breath?
 - d. Who or what do you follow after?

Just how serious do you think Jesus took discipleship? In Luke 14:25-27; 33 *“And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”* If you are a disciple of Christ, nothing else should interfere with your belief in Christ. If your husband won’t go with you to church, go without him. If your children get to an age where they refuse to go, leave them. Nothing or no one should have priority over your life – Christ should be the main focus. What does Jesus expect from you when you announce your calling to serve him? That you serve him no matter what. If your wife leaves you, serve him. If you lose a loved one, serve him. If you are rich, serve him. If you are poor, serve him.

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3. **It means an open life:** I Corinthians 4:9 *“For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.”* The word spectacle in the Greek translates to theater. Our lives are like movies or shows. Every time you move, someone is watching you. If you compromise, someone’s watching. If you lie, someone’s watching. When someone sees you slip up, you then become a hypocrite. The writer Charles Shelton wrote a book called “In His Steps”. The book is about a church who decided that for one year whatever they were going to do, they would ask themselves a question: What would Jesus do? Before they acted, they would ask themselves that question and act accordingly. Your actions or reactions reveal who you are.
4. **It means a missionary life:** Acts 1:8 *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* We should be living for Christ to show others how to live for him. Matthew 9:37-38 *“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”* How can we say that we are with Christ if we don’t have a burden for lost souls?