A vibrant sky with a rainbow and white clouds. The background is a deep blue sky with a bright rainbow arching across the center. Large, fluffy white clouds are scattered throughout, some catching the light of the sun, which is visible on the right side of the frame.

"In Christ"

Means we are

Positioned in Christ

+

In the Possession of Christ

“In Christ” is a both a position in Christ + possession by Christ

If our experience as Christians is limited to just knowing about God, it means we are still on our own, and living in the tribulations of the world as if we are orphans. And many who come to faith feel that God is still up there somewhere in heaven, too far away to actually walk with them and them with Him. Consequently there are many who only refer to the Bible as speaking about God being high and lifted up, far and beyond the realm of man’s reach. *“The LORD is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens.”* (Psalm 113:4) While this is true in one sense, it is not the whole truth. God is both far off and secured in our hearts. If our understanding of God with us isn’t complete, we will not know the power of the presence of God while we walk in the darkness of the world.

Some people even join the Church with the understanding that we can only know about God. They get involved in religious practice which is generally about performing certain practices that gain some supposed merit in the sight of God. There are many who become Christians make their decision to join the Church on the basis of accepting that Christ died for our sins, so we are positioned in the place of Christ, but hold to the idea that they are acceptable to God without the need to be disciples who follow Jesus’ example by walking with Him. Some want to believe in Christ while rejecting the need for any evidence that Christ is living in them. How can there be nothing to indicate the presence of God in someone who claims to be saved; has God lost His power? On that basis, according to the Bible, they are unable to know God as Father in the same way a child knows his father in submission and dependence.

This form of knowing God as being removed from our presence is a sort of religion which is foreign to what Christ taught; it is focused on the possibility of enjoying communion with God in some worship service, but lacks the ongoing personal intimacy with God that motivates obedience and trust in His presence. This is a form of religion that has no real sense of being united with God through Jesus Christ in order that we always live in the presence of God who also lives in us. The Bible is clear; those who have repented and obeyed Christ are united with God in spiritual union with Christ as the only daily life that has any spiritual meaning.

Unfortunately because of spiritual blindness to the fact that repentant believers are born again by God in the image of Christ; and because we often have an over emphasis on what some call ‘the sin nature’, and we

often speak as if we are “*a man of unclean lips.*” (Isaiah 6:5) And the ‘*wretched man I am*’ (Rom 7:24) who was in fact “*flesh, sold into bondage to sin.*” (Rom 7:14) We blindly overlook God’s word of encouragement which says we are the dwelling place of God. ‘*Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*’ 1 Cor 3:16

Therefore, because of this unbalanced understanding, many fail to grasp the tremendous privilege available in being joined in complete unity with Christ to live with Him now and always. The salvation found in Jesus Christ is not just about our legal acquittal from judgment so we can stand in a position of exoneration and mercy; it is more importantly about restoration into the very presence of God so that we can enjoy living with Him forever, starting right now.

With a lack of understanding about our unified life with the Father that Christ died for, we have a natural tendency to automatically fall back on thinking according to the flesh of sinful man, and we find that on the whole we fail to grasp the truth that we are indeed joined to God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Without understanding we are now one with Christ, we live for positional truth while we remain blind to the possession of Christ’s life. We may claim mercy but live as if we are still victims of a sinful world. We have a form of religion but lack its power.

God our Father has provided us with everything we need for holiness so we can live with Him. (2 Pet 1:3-4) This holy union only comes as a result of our repentance at the time we laid down our lives according to the flesh. (Gal 5:24) The Bible teaches us that as a result of our self denial we were made one with the Father and the Son by the Spirit. This unity we share is in one holy and eternal Spirit which means we are joined to God, and we therefore walk with God seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day, even if we are unaware of the fact. As we are the body of Christ because we are in Him who claims us as His own, He is in us through the one Spirit, so we are members of the family of the Almighty Father, and brothers and sisters with Christ.

The more aware we are of being joined together in God, the less we will be distributed by the tribulations we will naturally face in the fallen world. But the less we are aware of our unity with God, the greater our anxiety over many things we face in the world, because it means we will think more from the perspective of the weakness of the flesh which lacks the comfort and endurance of a life of faith in unity with God.

Yes we are positioned in Christ by His saving work

Before anything was created that was created, God chose to position us in Christ, that we would be holy and blameless in His presence. God has chosen us in Christ to be united with Him as in His family. *“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love”* Eph 1:4

In the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we were forgiven all our sins. *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”* Eph 1:7

‘with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.’ Eph 1:10

‘In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.’ Eph 1:11

‘to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.’ Eph 1:12

‘These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.’ Eph 1:19-20

But salvation is more than position; it is for our possession by God

Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the darkness of separation from God through sin, so that we can be transformed into the image of God's holiness, in order that we can actually live with God by the power of the Spirit of God. Therefore we must begin our Christian life by denying ourselves and taking up our cross to follow Christ. It is then we can know that we are eternally joined to God and always remain in communion with God, even though the quality of our daily communion is enhanced or diminished by how often our minds are either focused on the flesh or the Spirit.

Our position means we are His possession

‘I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.’ Gal 2:20

'In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.'

Col 2:12

'When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.'

Col 2:13

'Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.'

Rom 6:4

'Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.'

Rom 6:8

'For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.'

Gal 3:27

'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.'

2 Cor 5:17

'So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individual members one of another.'

Rom 12:5

'For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.'

Gal 3:26

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him'

Col 2:6

'for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

Acts 17:28

'in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge'

1 Cor 1:5

'For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.'

Gal 3:27

'For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.'

Col 3:3

'Whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.'

1 Jon 2:5-6

To be aware we are His possession requires a spiritual mindset

Having a spiritual mindset will mean we can be anxious for nothing, always give thanks in all things because we know we are secured in Christ, regardless of what is happening in the world. Having a fleshly mindset will cause us great anxiety, because the mind set on the flesh is a life without God because fleshly thinking lacks faith and hope, so fleshly thinking will see things from the perspective of the fallen world, and result in weeping and complaining rather than rejoicing in all things.

With our thinking fixed on the presence of the Spirit's life, that is, the life changing characteristics of the Spirit's life made alive in us, our obedience will indicate we are being led by the Spirit, and His presence will give us peace because we will know we are with God. All our thinking that is contrary to the life of the Spirit, and therefore the life of Christ, are of the flesh, and should indicate to us that we need to turn on the light and set our minds once again on the Spirit who is life and peace.

Consequently, all anxiety, fretting and distress should be seen as a warning that we have begun to think according to the flesh, which means we cannot be comforted by the presence of God. Our task is to take charge of our thinking and our attitudes so that we reflect the transforming work God has performed in our spirits. This is the ongoing process of our sanctification by the Spirit, which results in our gradual daily transformation into the image of Christ, and should always be evidenced by less anxiety and more rejoicing. But it will only happen if we actually believe we have been united with God in Christ by the Spirit. If we are unable to give thanks in all things, it can be because we don't actually believe we are a new creation and secured in Christ and therefore live in God; and as a result have the confidence that He works out everything for our greatest good so that we can be more readily transformed into the image of Christ.

Knowing the nature of our true state of holy existence with God (which is bought about as a result of the work of Christ on our behalf) will mean we should have the assurance that comes from our life being hidden in God through Jesus Christ. With this assurance of being in Christ, we can know God is working in us to will and to do according to His will for our greatest good, and this is still true in every difficult and disagreeable event in our lives on earth which He allows for our training in righteousness. Children don't develop into adults by remaining in play school.

If you have never really repented and surrendered your life in the world to be born again by the Spirit, then none of this will make any sense to you. But if you have died to yourself to live for Christ, then you are united with God in Christ, and His presence is your peace, and His peace is your peace, even as you suffer with Him while you serve Him in the world of darkness.

Rom 8:17

But there is more to life in Christ; everyone who has forsaken themselves to live for Christ is joined to everyone who is in Christ, for there is only one body, and one Spirit. As we are one Spirit in Christ, we are also one body of Christ, even as we live in the world. Being the body of Christ is significant, for as recipients of His life, we are equipped by the Spirit to carry out His purpose in reaching every lost soul, even while we work to build up His body the church, so that we can present everyone complete in Him.

Therefore there is no possibility of any believer deciding they can do their own thing. Anyone who wants to have an independent view of being a Christian has never understood that repentance means dying to self to live for Christ. They may be part of the visible church, but haven't been born of the Spirit with the unifying life of Christ. The Spirit of God is jealous about God's children reflecting His life and purpose. So when the troubles of the world visit those who walk alone they will have nothing to support them but what the weak flesh offers, so anxiety and stress will be their constant companions.

And while it seems to take a long time for many repentant believers to realise the Christian life is actually united with God in Christ, it should be one of the first things we learn when we come to faith in Christ. This is most important; for our whole existence is now dependent on being joined to Him who gives us His life, just as the branches are one life with the vine. Unfortunately the truth about being joined to God is for many just a great theological ideal, when instead it should be our daily bread and butter.

Jesus Christ gives us His peace, precisely because He gives us Himself. If we can't grasp the truth of God's life being joined to us as one life, we cannot enjoy the benefits of knowing we have received every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Eph 1:3) And we will behave like those who have inherited the kingdom of God but are blinded by ignorance and still play in the dirt as the beggars' children. Furthermore, any idea we

can have communion with God and live for ourselves and not for Him who died and rose again, is just another lie from the prince of darkness.

When we walk with God as His possession we will benefit from the many ways He provides for our needs as members of His kingdom's reality. When we walk with God we will know how much our Father loves us, and we will discover He even uses the daily adversity we face to promote our holiness. In this way, our Father has provided that those who would be our antagonist and adversaries should work for our glory, so we will love them as we would love ourselves. We are told to: "*Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not.*" (Rom 12:14) "*But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.*" Matt 5:44

Christ brings Spiritual life to the repentant believer

The repentant no longer lives for the flesh but for the Spirit.

'For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.'

Rom 8:3-8

To forget what Christ has done in us means going back to live in the flesh. *'Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?'*

Gal 3:3

Jesus set us free from the power of the flesh so we can walk by the Spirit and please God.

'But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife,

jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.'

Gal 5:16-25

The war between the flesh and the Spirit is a continual struggle in this present life. Therefore we must persistently ensure that we are living in union with Christ by putting away the desires and temptations of the world. We need to keep ourselves informed as to the spiritual methods of remaining in communion with God in Christ. Snoozers are losers.

A lack of spiritual perseverance in walking by the Spirit and neglecting the self discipline of fixing our minds on Christ will invite the mind to return to fleshly thinking and behaving.

Jesus Christ came to reconcile self indulgent individuals into loving union with their righteous and almighty God. This is God's grace for our reconciliation, so that we can enjoy a right and acceptable standing before the Holiness of God as Jesus does. But Christ's reconciliation through grace should be understood to be more than being justified before the heavenly judge. Christ's salvation from sin unites us as a bride is made one with the husband who is also judge and King.

The healing of this relationship between man and God is intended to be the richest blessing that can be cherished in the oneness of spirit between the love of the husband and bride. This fullness of the union of love between creator and the created is to be the example for all relationships on earth and in heaven. Jesus commands us to love as He has loved us. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* John 13:34-35

Union is about Communion with God

Over the years there has been a lot of emphasis on the believer's communion with God, but there is often no real idea of being 'in Him'. Many hold to a view of position without possession which is a mistaken idea of spiritual communion, and not much different from those who are

separated from Him in their sinfulness, for the whole idea of union in communion with Christ should be found in the daily walk of those united to Christ. This Holy Communion in Christ has its spiritual highs and spiritual lows because we often choose to exert our independence; and this is because of the tendency we have as we grow up into Christ to look for what we need in the world, so the gulf between God in heaven and man on earth remains a constant problem for many.

Is this what the Bible teaches? There are many who quote the Bible in a way that gives the impression we are greatly separated from God. But are we in no better place than Isaiah, who many quote as proving the gap between us and God: *“Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips.”* Isa 6:5

Isaiah lived in a time where spiritual union with God by rebirth was impossible.

Until Christ rose again all men were far from union with God. Should we think like those of the Old Testament? Has the work of Christ in redeeming the lost from the power of sin been ineffective so that we don't actually walk with God? Are we not cleansed by His blood and given a new life?

Far from God being distant from us, Jesus Christ came so that we could be reconciled into a loving relationship in the continual presence of almighty God. Our salvation is not just that we might know about God, but that we would know God as we know our husbands or our wives. Separation caused by sinful rebellion would be replaced with holy intimacy. What Jesus intends for all who would repent and believe is that we are united with God through Him by the power of the Spirit. Christ died so that we can have a new heart and spirit acceptable to God so we can enjoy living in His presence.

Our unity with Christ is described in the Bibles in terms of being “In Christ” this occurs at least 86 times, and “with Christ” 10 times, “in Him” 36 times, “with Him” 20 times, “In the Spirit” 9, “According to the Spirit” 2, and “Walk by the Spirit” 3.

The position and possession of the believer in Christ is no small issue, for our lives depend on it. To be in Christ means the believer no longer belongs to the world. To be joined with God in Christ means we have died to the world. To be in Christ means we are legally and eternally incorporated into Him. To be in Christ means the believers' pathway

through life is determined by the Lord. To be in Christ means we find our true identity in Him. *"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."*

John 14:20

Believers are "in Christ" in order to have a relationship with Him

Because we are positioned 'in Christ' through His work of redemption, we are therefore relationally 'In Him' who is our Lord and Saviour.

When Jesus took our place on the cross, He suffered the punishment our sin deserves. His last words before He died were, *"It is finished."* (John 19:30) What He finished was God's plan to redeem His fallen world. He was stating that He had successfully paid in full for every act of rebellion, past, present, and future.

To be *"in Christ"* means we have accepted His sacrifice as payment for our own sin so we can live for Him. The Bible says that in our natural sinful state we are enemies of God. (Rom 5:10) When we accept Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, He takes our death and gives us His life. He exchanges our list of sins for His perfect life that is pleasing to God. (2 Cor 5:21) For our benefit a Divine Exchange takes place at the foot of the cross between our old sin nature and His perfect one.

2 Cor 5:17

To enter the presence of a Holy God, we must be hidden in the righteousness of Christ. To be *"in Christ"* means that God no longer sees our fleshly imperfections as a barrier to possession. *'Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus have been baptised into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.'*

Rom 6:3-8

Now the Father sees the righteousness of His own Son in those who have died with Him. (Eph 2:13; Heb 8:12) Only *"in Christ"* can our sin debt be cancelled, and our relationship with God restored, and our eternity secured.

John 3:16-18, 20:31

Unity in Christ is unity with those in Christ

Being *'in Christ'* is more than a private union; everyone who has forsaken themselves to live for Christ is joined to all others who are in Christ, as one body, in one Spirit. As we are one Spirit in Christ, we are also His one body of Christ in the world. As recipients of His life, we are all together equipped by the Spirit to carry out His purpose in reaching every lost soul, even while we work to build up His body the church, so that we can present everyone complete in Him.

When we are committed to serving Christ and not ourselves, the Spirit will gift us with an ability to work for Him. We won't have to wonder what this ability is, or go looking in some list to discover our talent, for it will show itself naturally in our passion and desire as we work with others in Christ, in witnessing to Christ, so that those who are in the darkness without God may come into His marvellous light. Those who are led by the Spirit work for Christ; these are the children of God. *'For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.'*

Rom 8:14

God's children don't walk alone, He doesn't have many orphans, Christ has many brothers and sisters who look out for each others as they serve Him as the Spirit directs.

The way of Christ is our life and peace

'The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.'

Rom 8:6

The mind that is fixed on any aspect of the unregenerate man will think like the sinful man naturally thinks, and then act accordingly. If there is some affinity or attraction with the nature of the flesh, the thoughts it generates will often be followed without question.

Without going through a great list of fleshly attitudes and behaviour, we can conclude that the flesh is all that Jesus isn't, whatever He wouldn't do is what we should not do. Jesus shows us how we are to walk by the Spirit in His light, He separated Himself from the world's ways that are darkness, and He has called us to do the same, for in Him we have crucified the flesh to live in His light.

"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

Gal 5:24

Which way are you going?

We can tell when we are walking after the flesh, because the mind is taken up with desire for the world and things and human experience fill the mind with all sorts of useless ideas, which replaces a strong desire for intimacy with God and the things that are of interest to God. When we complain about how we are treated by people or what we don't have in the world, we are thinking in a fleshly way and denying our unity in Christ who has given us all that is His as a Son inherits the Father's estate.

People who chose to live in the darkness of their declaration of independence have to rely on learnt behaviour, for they lack the power of the Spirit to live as children of God. And this learnt behaviour is not living Christ's life. Being good is not being godly; walking with God the Spirit and being led into His passions and purposes because we love Him as He lives in us is what makes us godly.

Religious behaviour is learnt behaviour, and learnt behaviour is often mistaken for sanctified transformation. All manmade religions, whether organised or privately conceived, are based on positional aspirations concerned with some level of learnt behaviour. Many have a Christian religion of their own making.

The general attitude of the mind indicates where our hearts belong, whether in the world or in the Spirit of God. Our occasional thoughts of God with some daily religious practice can easily be learnt behaviour and doesn't indicate that we have died to the world, and we no longer live, for Christ lives in us. Daily Bible reading doesn't mean I no longer live for myself, but for Him who died and rose again. The Jews of Christ's day were more zealous than most so called believers today, but they killed Him.

Only the devotion shown in obedience to Christ with all the love of the heart, mind and strength indicates His divine indwelling, and is what we should be looking for. To be a Christian is to live with Christ as the centre of our life that seeks first the kingdom of God. When our minds are ruled by concerns of the world and disagreeable events and people, are we not fleshly? When our hearts and minds are preoccupied with God, the temptations of the flesh are less likely to be obeyed, even though the opposition from the flesh we inherited from Adam continues.

Any unholy thoughts that fall short of Christ's life that go unchallenged will quickly result in unholy action, or be stored as the basis for further fleshly indulgence. If there is some liking for the nature of the flesh, the thoughts it generates will often be followed without question.

To claim to have a legal position in Christ without Christ's daily claim over our lives is to claim a position without giving oneself to Christ as His possession to live intimately with Him. It means we may well hear Him say. *"Depart from Me I never knew you"* Matt 7:21-23

According to the Bible, to claim legal rights without actual possession means the relationship is a sham. For the relationship to have any meaning it has to be consummated. To consummate means to bring something to completion. To claim to have Christ without the Spirit revealing His presence in us means His Spirit hasn't consummated the relationship.

When the fruit of Christ's life and teaching is absent, the relationship doesn't appear to be consummated, and there is scant evidence of being a witness to His life. Once the relationship with Christ is consummated by the love of the Holy Spirit being poured into the heart, the recipient of Christ's Spirit is never without the evidence of the Spirit working, and the spiritually reborn life will be a genuine witness to Christ's indwelling.

Our position in Christ is of no value unless we are possessed by Christ. We can only be possessed by Christ if we have crucified the flesh to live for Him. If there is no possession there is no worthwhile position. Without being taken as Christ's possession, the hoped for a position in heaven is just a deception.

Our lives reveal what we believe

Self examination is a must if we are to avoid being deceived. We need to ask ourselves the question: Is what I am doing on a daily basis something I would do in the presence of God if I actually live for Him? Is it consistent with His life living through me? If not, I have chosen position without possession. I am living as if the Spirit is not in possession of my soul.

A positional life by itself lacks the power to be godly, because the flesh can always justify ungodliness as necessary for life in the world. But if we are in Christ, He is in possession of us, so we are in the world but not of the world to please ourselves. The only way to live a godly life is to walk by the Spirit in communion with the Son of God.

The world wants position without Christ's possession, so they can live for themselves and not for Him who died and rose again. Biblical Sanctification is the process of taking the cross to everything in us that is not consistent with His life and purpose to the glory of God. The world openly denies God's rule, but everyone wants to go to heaven when they die.

Our stability in a troubled world depends on living for Christ. Christ' life in us is not put off from loving us and serving the Father through tribulations, or by the world's injustice, or by hunger and poverty, or by the unloving ways of men, or by threats of the sword. All this is worldly and temporal, but Christ is eternal, and He gives us His eternal life.

The prince of darkness says we should be comfortable, we should enjoy all things. If things aren't working out the way we expected, then we should take things into our own hands. After all, God has blessed you with all the best of the world so you should enjoy the world and make your own way.

But God says, if things aren't working out the way we expected, don't take things into our own hands, trust Him who made all things. *'Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.'*

Prov 3:5-6

This world is not the end game; this world is for convicting men of sin, and for training His chosen ones in righteousness in a fallen world. When God decides the time is up, this world will come to an end. Saying we need to look after ourselves is an excuse for disobeying God. We must work to provide for our daily needs, but we must never have any justification for not following Christ and His teaching.

The Day of the Lord is coming. Everything will work out in the end for those who have a position in heaven to come, because they are possessed by God while He works out His plan in the world. For those who want a position without possession, the end will be for their judgment.

In every situation we are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Regardless of how we are treated, we are to love others as Christ even now loves us so we can share in His holiness. If a life of repentance hasn't been undertaken, any hope of spiritual life is only a pipe dream because we still live according to the flesh.

Paul teaches us about position and possession

Paul illustrates an example of a life according to the position of the flesh when talking about living under the law in bondage to the flesh: *"For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members."*

Rom 7:14, 18, 23

To show the correct way for believers, Paul writes about life in the Spirit for those who are in Christ. *"So that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."*

Rom 8:4-9

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."

Gal 5:16-17, 24-25

Because of the ongoing opposition to the Spirit we face in the world on a daily basis, our eternal spiritual vigilance is needed to guard our minds and hearts, if we are to keep ourselves from lapsing into fleshly thinking.

"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and

have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

Col 3:5-10 ESV

Be encouraged:

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."

2 Peter 1:3-4 ESV

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Rom 12:1-2

Having some position is not divine possession

The Jews believed they had the exclusive position as the people of God. Paul, before His conversion, believed he shared in that exclusive position. But when he encountered Christ, or better, when Christ encountered him, Paul was able to understand the transforming power of Christ's possession of his life.

The way of Christ is based on complete ownership of the individual by God in Christ. God's possession only comes when we die to self in order to receive a new birth of the Spirit of Jesus. It is then He possesses the life of the repentant believer by His life being implanted in the believer by the Spirit of God, so that the life of Christ is now the life of the believer. This implanted Spiritual life is to naturally reflect the life of Christ in God.

However those who have received the spiritual life of God under the power of the Spirit have to transform the earthly ways of the mind that remain so that Christ's life becomes the normal way of thinking and living. To do this we are to consider our life in the flesh of natural man has been crucified with Christ, so that we accept the reality of being a new creation of godliness in Christ.

Our thinking is now to progressively reflect His life and godliness in all truth. The old ways we learnt from the suffering world are no longer to

determine the contents of our hearts and minds in Christ. What we experience of the disagreeable ways of the world should not determine the level of our peace or rejoicing. Instead we rejoice that Christ is our life. We witness to Christ when we live for Him by the Spirit and not for ourselves which is life according to the flesh.

Don't be deceived by learnt behaviour. Bible knowledge and religious education may help us feel we are well positioned for heaven, but if it doesn't result in being possessed by God, we are in no better a place than Paul. His self righteousness was leading him to an eternity without God until he was encountered by Christ and declared Him to be Lord. It was only then that God granted him the repentance that leads to life. Having a good religious position by itself is no better than having a bus ticket to heaven when there are no busses. Paul's experience shows us, that unless our life is changed to reflect the Lord's, and we start serving Him for His kingdom sake, we have nothing of value but hope in our own fleshly efforts.

To have any confidence we are destined for heaven, our position must begin at the cross of Christ, and then we are blessed with being His possession so that we live for Him because He lives in us. *'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.'*
Gal 2:20

Eternal life is position + possession

God's gift of the Eternal Spirit to live in us as our only life needs to replace the life we once lived according to the outer desires of the flesh.

Therefore when God works His power of forgiveness for us, He gives us a new life in the Spirit that must take precedence over the outer life we once lived according to the flesh.

The Spirit of Christ in us is now the centre of our life. Everything we do is for Him and through Him. The Spirit of God possessing us now has dominion over our life. He needs to be determining our priorities and our life's purpose. He does this because we now live for Christ who lives in us; He has to have possession of our life because He is God in us.

All our desires and the focus of our hearts and minds are now to be to pleasing to Him who is our life and peace. When our desires are for the

external things of the flesh and the world, (that is, the life we lived before He came to live in us) we will be unable to enjoy the abundant life of peace and fellowship that our loving God brings when we desire Christ who lives in us.

Life according to the Spirit is to add colour and holy flavour to our entire life in the world, not the other way around. We don't live for the outer life according to the flesh and add some spiritual flavour to pacify our guilt. Our life by the Spirit is intended to fill the whole menu.

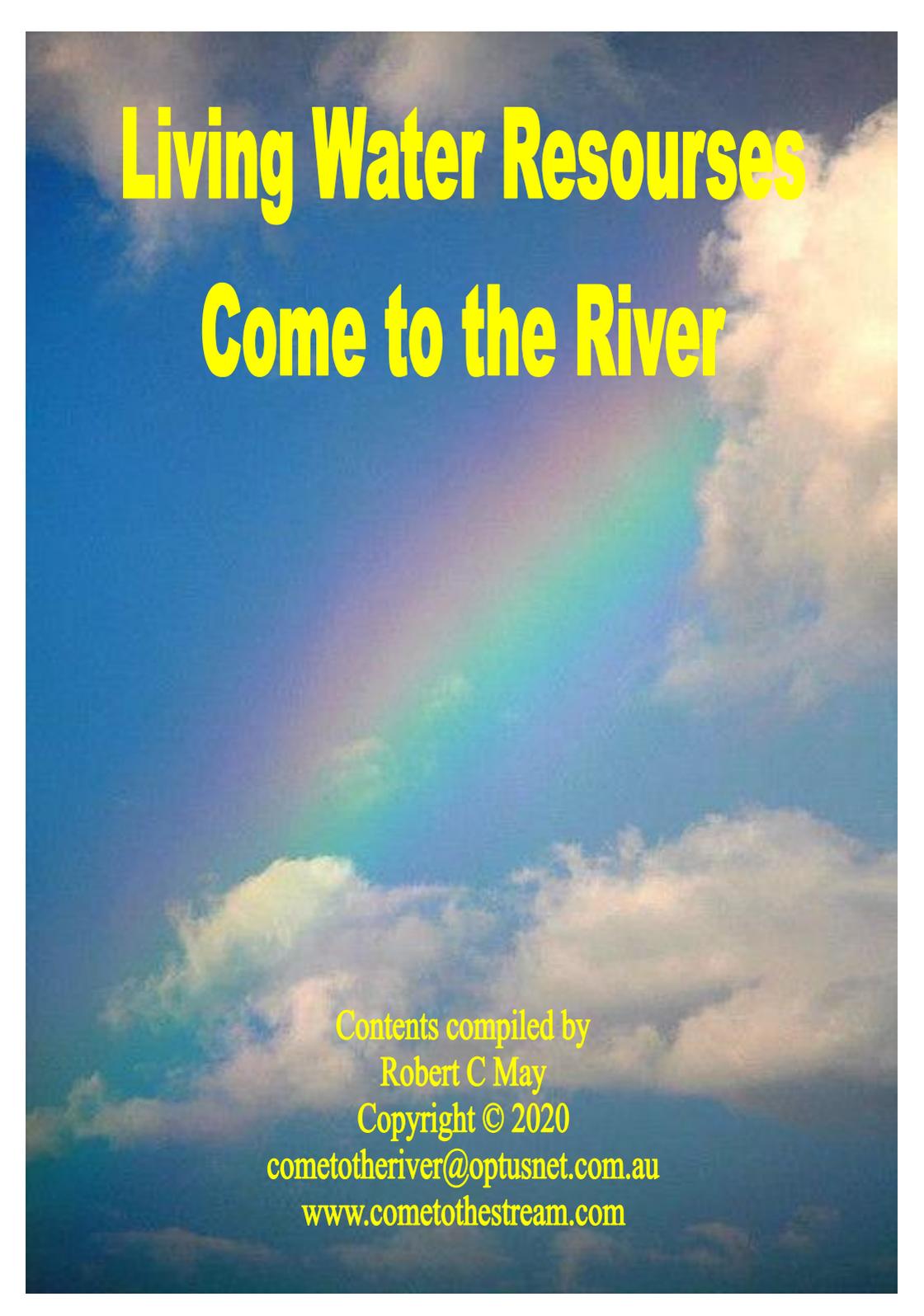
When we live as if we have added a spiritual chapter to our lives in becoming Christians who think they have a special position in His kingdom, we are not freed from the power of sin and temptation, we are not free from the oppression of the world; so we continue to carry the burdens of our broken hearts and minds that we readily accumulated in the world because of our sins and the sins of others.

Jesus Christ came to give us a new life in His image, so as we lay down our life in the flesh to live for Him, He comes to abide in us and take possession of our lives so we can enjoy fellowship with God every day. To be *in Christ* is to enjoy a privileged position in His name; and this position of His righteousness accounted to our benefit is so that we can enjoy His life imparted to us as He takes possession of our lives as His holy temple.

But our hearts and minds must always be fixed on Him who lives in us by the power of the Spirit of God; otherwise we will live according to the habits of our past life in the flesh.

Christ's possession is our daily Holy Communion. The Holy Spirit consummates our union with Christ, as the Eternal Husband is joined to His beloved wife. It is not possible to be in divine communion with Christ just in scheduled times of Holy Communion in Church if we are not living in communion with Christ on a daily basis. Christ' possession of us is also our possession of Him. When we live for Him we are consummated as a husband is to His wife. The husband and wife take possession of each other as they become one life. Their children are bound by the parents union.

A sometimes Christian life is like taking a make believe medicine called a placebo; it is an excuse designed to appease someone but has no lasting effect. If you have bought a ticket of position but Christ hasn't taken possession, you cannot attend the marriage supper of the Lamb. We must surrender ourselves to His love so He possesses all of our heart and minds.



Living Water Resources

Come to the River

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