

# LifeSpot ... In Christ

## Intimate rest

"In Christ." It's a dominant theme that deserves massive attention. But it gets little. In the New Testament there are more than 240 direct or indirect references to being "in Christ". The phrase depicts a *fixed position of intimate rest*. Picture a bird in the nest, a joey kangaroo in the pouch, an astronaut in a space suit. Outside is danger, fear, even death. Inside is safety, peace, life. In biblical Greek and modern English, "in" means *in*! Not alongside, behind, ahead of, over, or near—but *in*. This is the relationship available to us, the closeness to himself that God proposes. How is it for you today? Are you alongside, behind, or near? Jesus opens his heart and his arms and says, "Come on *in*."



## Transforming reality



"In Christ." The concept appears more than 240 times in the New Testament. But you won't find it in the gospels, except for one place—John 17. In his holy prayer to the Father shortly before his death, Jesus pleaded "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us. . . . May they be one as we are one: I in them and you in me" (NIV). It's a mistake to see this as talking merely about Christians having unity. This is talking about our personal standing and our identity. If you want an excellent exercise for today, spend an hour on this thought—you may be one with Christ, as Christ is one with his Father. You in Christ. Christ in you. Now that's transforming!

## New identity

"In Christ" It's a question of identity. Children establish their identity in their parents. Teens in their peers. Adults in a variety of sources—society, work, family, church, possessions, knowledge, hobbies, self-understanding. People in witness protection programmes sometimes establish a new identity. This can be a matter of life and death. Christ invites us to establish a new identity in him—a matter of life and death. What it means is that my whole being becomes characterised by Christ, energised by Christ. "For me to live is Christ." Work? In Christ. Family? In Christ. Hobbies? In Christ. Spirituality? In Christ. I live, move and thrive in Christ. I love my new identity!



## Fresh experience



"In Christ." It's a massive theme of the New Testament. But in the gospels, we find only one mention. Why so little? Jesus explained, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear." John 16:12 (NIV). What was the "much more", and when did Jesus finally share it? The "much more" turned out to be a totally new teaching—the mysterious privilege of receiving God's Spirit and living in Christ. The Spirit delivered this teaching through Paul. "God was pleased to reveal his Son in me," said the apostle—and Paul made the "in Christ" mystery the heartbeat of his message. Paul's own fresh experience began on the Damascus Road, and continued in the Arabian desert. Has it happened for you? Has Christ appeared on your Damascus Road, and by the Spirit are you "in him" today?

## Astonishing privilege

"In Christ." It's the piece of Jesus' teaching that had to wait until the mighty working of the Spirit through the apostle Paul. "In Christ" is a mystery prepared before the world began—hidden from Abraham, Moses and David. Want a powerful Bible study? Examine Galatians 1, 1 Corinthians 2, 2 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 3, Colossians 1, and Romans 8. See how the Holy Spirit unites believers in complete oneness with Father and Son. It's astonishing. Immersed in God's love. Having in you "the mind of Christ". You can't manufacture this; you won't always feel it. But it's true anyway. God sees you in Christ, hears you in Christ, teaches you in Christ, keeps you in Christ. Relax—enjoy the privilege!



## Profound truth



"In Christ." It's not a sweet spot just for ourselves. The "in Christ" message embraces the disadvantaged, the discouraged, the disgusting, and the deceived. Jesus extended his "in Christ" prayer to all in the world who are called into faith. John 17:20–21. The shocking revelation given to Paul was that ungodly people are invited into equal standing in Christ. Ephesians 3:4–9. This is a profound truth—the people you don't like, the ones you diminish, are potentially or actually just as privileged as

you are in Christ. The "in Christ" message rebukes our prejudices, our argumentation and our divisions. This applies in the church and in society. In Christ, we stop our fighting and begin our loving. Let's take stock of this profound truth today.

## Everything desired

In Christ, we have every heavenly blessing it's possible for us to have on Earth—because in Christ is all of Heaven. From the New Testament, it's possible to make a list of around 90 things that are ours in Christ. Examples: Assurance, cleansing, comfort, endurance, every good thing, forgiveness, healing, holiness, the Holy Spirit, joy, purity, rest, righteousness, security, strength, unity, victory, wisdom. Our living is in Christ, along with our good behaviour, our suffering, our worship, our witness, and our dying. If we try to find these in ourselves, in stand-alone doctrine, or even in relationship with church, we'll be miserable. They are found in Christ—in deep, personal abiding in him. Praise God for this!



## Incredible presence



I am in Christ, and Christ is in me. Paul uses these dual expressions interchangeably. First: *I am in Christ*. When Jesus was in the carpenter shop and the wilderness of temptation, I was there—in him. At his baptism and his miracles, I was there. At the Cross, the resurrection, the ascension, and Pentecost, I was there. In his ministry in Heaven right now, I am there—in him. Second: *Christ is in me*. At the supermarket and at my job, he is there—in me. In my

Bible study and my family life, he is there. In my temptations and sins, he is there. In my recreation, my witness and my pain, he is there—in me. Incredible! "To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:21 (NIV).