

Christ is all

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[0 : 0 0] The first chapter, and to consider words at the end of the chapter, verse 30, But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

But according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Now as we all agree, our needs as humans here on earth are many and varied. They are both temporal and spiritual.

Needs for time, needs for eternity. But as we are taught of God's Spirit, we come to know our needs.

As we could never know them without the enlightenment of God the Holy Spirit. Now that is true in particular with regard to our spiritual needs.

[1 : 2 1] But it is also true insofar as our temporal needs are concerned. Remember how our Lord taught his disciples to be fearful for nothing.

Saying, fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Now their fears at that juncture in their experience was one of, was one that concerned their temporal affairs.

Because they were the Lord's. They were conscious of needs that they had for this present life. And they were fearful concerning the future. Concerning what was to be, to happen to them and so on.

But he reminded them that their God was the God who closed the lily in the field. And who closed the sparrow that flew to the tree top. And he reminded them that Solomon in all his glory was not closed as one of those lilies.

Because God provided its every need. And so he would provide their needs. And Paul, you will remember, our God through Paul reminds us as Christians under the New Testament economy.

[2 : 3 8] That God will supply all our needs according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus. Whether they be temporal or spiritual.

Now, as I said, it is the man who knows himself who knows something of his needs. But it is the man or woman enlightened by God the Holy Spirit who has a true knowledge of himself or herself.

This is something that God the Holy Spirit does. When he comes to dwell in our hearts. He gives us a consciousness of our spiritual needs.

He gives us a consciousness of our needs as sinners before God. Of our need of salvation. And there is no man, no woman, has a true consciousness of this need.

But such as are illuminated, enlightened, taught of God the Holy Spirit. And the fact that so many people among us have such very little knowledge of their need.

- [3 : 53] Or no knowledge at all of their need. Is manifest evidence of the fact that God's Spirit is not working amongst us. As he has done in other ages, down through the centuries.
- This is the great need of the hour. Indeed, that God would come to convince us of our sins. To convince us of our needs. To convince us in such a way that we will resort to the answer to our needs.
- That in our needs we will cry out to the God who made us and created us. And the God who has provided for our every need in Jesus Christ.
- And it is not only through that those who are as yet not quickened by the Holy Spirit. That are blind to the need.
- God's people, when the Holy Spirit is denying them to a certain extent. They likewise become less conscious of their need.
- [5 : 00] Less conscious of their need of grace. Their need of strength. Their need of the gift of the Spirit and so on.
- So that we can drift along almost. As if our needs were few. As if we can manage quite well on our own. But when God the Holy Spirit quickens the soul.
- Revives the soul. Then we realize that we are always in need. That we are always in need. Because we are always sinners whilst this side of the grave.
- And so, likewise, we will resort no more. To the fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness. This is why we should always pray that the Holy Spirit would keep us.
- That the Holy Spirit would quicken us more and more. So that we will be all the more careful and watchful. And prayerful. And thereby, be all the more open to receive the blessings that Christ has purchased for us.
- [6 : 15] You know how it is. As the gospel is preached. Sometimes, it has no effect at all upon us. So we seem. It seems. But the gospel always has an effect.
- It is either a savor of life unto life. Or of death unto death. But there are other times, of course, when we are only too conscious. That the gospel is as abominant to our souls.
- And Christ is all the more precious to us. And that, on account of the fact that we are conscious of the emptiness that is ours without him.
- There are four particular blessings brought before us here. Which meet four particular needs of sinners such as you and me.
- They are wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.
- [7 : 18] You see, the fact is that we are ignorant. And therefore, need wisdom. We are guilty.
- And therefore, need righteousness. We are unholy. And therefore, need sanctification. We are dying. And therefore, need redemption.
- Now, you'll notice there is order and succession of thought in the blessings before us here. We need all these blessings. And they're all ours.
- In Christ. When we receive Christ, we receive these. And when we receive these, we receive really everything we need.
- Although there are other needs that can be considered as flowing from the four particular needs I've mentioned. And of course, there are in Christ sufficient blessings to meet all such needs.
- [8 : 24] I wish to consider with you these four particular blessings then. That meet four particular needs of sinners such as you and me tonight.
- First of all, there is the blessing of wisdom. And this is something we all need.
- We all need wisdom. God's Word tells us that wisdom is better than rubies.

Therefore, get wisdom, says God's Word. And with all thy getting, get understanding. Do not be satisfied with anything you already have in relation to wisdom.

If you have wisdom, get more of it. And the more you get of it, seek more of it. And my friends, we're all in need of wisdom. This is so with temporal things.

[9 : 32] As we conduct our lives each day. As we meet up with all the problems of life. We are in need of great wisdom.

As we seek to conduct our own lives. And those of us who are responsible for other people's lives. Our families. Our children. We are surely conscious of our need of wisdom.

Particularly at this time. Because there are so many ways one could go. And there are so many instructions that one could give.

And yet you fear that having given instruction. That perhaps we give the wrong instruction. And so we're in need of great wisdom. As we likewise are associated with people in this life.

As we rub shoulders with people. Come into contact with people. We're in great need of wisdom. As how to conduct ourselves. Particularly if we are at all concerned about the good of others.

[10 : 38] And we ought always to be concerned with others' good. We should love our neighbours as ourselves. And perhaps we don't take that to heart as we ought.

You see, we love ourselves so much. But do we love our neighbours as we love ourselves? By the grace of God we can do that. But my friends, if it is true that we need wisdom for our conduct in this life.

How much more do we need wisdom with eternal realities? What is important above all else is to be wise unto salvation.

That is what is important. Oh, I'm not saying it isn't important to be wise in our dealings with others. But it is most important to be wise unto salvation. Now you'll notice here how Paul deals with this word wisdom.

The Greek philosophers flattered themselves that they were more wise than any others. The Jewish scribes on the other hand believed that they had the greatest wisdom of all.

[11 : 50] What does Paul see? What does God's word see? Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. You see, the Greeks, they thought that they were wise.

The scribes, the Jews, scribes thought they were wise also. And of course there was this dispute between the Greek and the Jew. But where is the disputer?

Where is the authority of these men? Where has it gone? God has made foolish the wisdom of this world. And by the foolishness of preaching, he has purpose to save them that believe.

Is it that preaching is foolish? Not at all. But men think it is foolish. See, there's nothing new under the sun. Men today think preaching is foolish. In the church, people tell us we should really push the preaching of the word aside.

[12 : 55] Rather have dialogue or something of that nature. That preaching is not all that important. Particularly in this modern age where people are not accustomed to hearing a person preach for say 20 minutes, half an hour or so on.

It's no longer of any much use. But you see, that is the very means God has used to convert sinners. Now, in the days of Paul, they also argued that way.

They said preaching is foolish. But God's word tells us that it pleased God by what men call foolishness to save them that believe.

You see, the Jews, he says, require a sign. The Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ and him crucified. Which is a stumbling block to the Jews. It is foolishness to the Greeks.

But to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, whatever they are, it is Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. Here then is wisdom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[13 : 57] He is the word of God. He is the wisdom of God. The word of God and the wisdom of God. In him all the pleasures of wisdom and knowledge dwell.

All the pleasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him. And if you would be wise, my friend, come to Christ. Don't be wise in your own esteem.

Because if we are wise in our own esteem, we shall soon fall. And we'll soon realize, ultimately, that our own wisdom avails nothing.

He is the wisdom of God. By his character. By his teaching. By his life. By his death. God has declared, as we read, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places even.

What? His own manifold wisdom. Even to the angelic hosts has been declared the manifold wisdom of God.

[15 : 05] What? In Christ. In his person, as I said. In his life. In his ministry. But above all, in his death on the cross. And to us. He declares his wisdom therein also. It never entered into the heart of man.

Into the mind of man. Into the thought of man. But God has prepared us by his spirit. What God has done. Man would never dream of such a means of salvation as God has provided in Christ.

This is why man rejects Christ and him crucified. As the way of salvation. Because, you see, it is not in accordance with his reasoning. When Paul went to Mars Hill to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, they called him a fool.

But that very preaching that they called foolishness. Was the preaching which turned the world upside down. Thousands were saved by the preaching of the word. By the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Thousands believed by the grace of God and were saved. And were made wise unto salvation. How do we stand tonight, I wonder, in the presence of God? Are we still clinging to our own wisdom and our own resource?

[16 : 14] In seeking to save ourselves in our own way. By our own efforts. Rejecting God's way. Considering ourselves to be more wise than God.

Refusing to accept God's way of salvation. That is what was true of the Jews. Jesus Christ and him crucified was a stumbling block to them. They were religious people.

They were very religious people. They read their Bibles. They went to church of the right. At least they went to the synagogue. And they worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as best they could.

And providing they were religious, that was all that they wanted to be. But once Jesus Christ and him crucified was brought before them, what did they say? Away with him. They didn't want that teaching.

To believe in a crucified Christ. They would have none of that. I wonder if there's such among ourselves. I fear there are many. Because you see, there's no other reason why people are not saved among us.

[17 : 16] Having heard the gospel for so long. Having been under the preaching of the cross of Christ for so long. And yet still unsaved. There is only one reason for it.

They are too wise in themselves. They are like the Jews. Jesus Christ and him crucified is a stumbling block. You will be religious. One once said that there are some people who have just enough religion to take them to hell.

I wonder if there are such people among us. Are you, are you? On the other hand, like the Greek, who was not religious at all.

You know, the Greeks were famous, as they still are, for their philosophy. They were thinking men. They were learned men. They were very intelligent men.

They thought out matters for themselves. And they debated one subject after another. But they never came to a knowledge of the truth.

[18 : 26] And they themselves were the first to acknowledge that. That they still sought after it. But they sought after it according to their own reasoning. And there are some among us also.

Who reject Christ because they cannot reason out these matters by their own intellect. It seems irrational to them that God would save any soul in this way.

And so they reject Christ. And they reject salvation therein. All my friends, the treasures of divine wisdom are entrusted to the Lord.

For the instruction of the church also. And these are now accessible to us in Christ. My friends, pray to God to enlighten your mind.

That you might see the glory of Jesus Christ. Because through him we are made wise unto salvation. Through Christ we are made wise unto salvation.

[19 : 40] We look to him as our infallible teacher if we are his. If we are not his we don't. Remember Nicodemus.

He came to our Lord saying, Thou art a teacher come from God. No man could teach. Thus except God be with him.

He was as yet still a Jew. A blind Jew. And remember how our Lord spoke to him. He says, You must be born again. Now, that was something he could not understand.

How can a man be born again? See, he was so learned. He was so, He was well educated, if you like, In the things of God. Outwardly.

And he had an intelligent grasp of the truth of God. Of the law. And the precepts of Judaism and so on. But, This truth of the necessity of being born again.

[20 : 44] Oh no, that never entered into his reckoning. And when he began to try and understand what our Lord said, He misunderstood our Lord altogether. How can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again, said he.

Now there is the reasoning of the natural man. Religious though he was. But he was a fortunate man, Nicodemus.

He came to the right source to be taught. And that is where you and I must go. To the Lord himself and his word. Because you see, The Lord is seen by his own light, if you like.

God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, Hath shined into our hearts, To give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. As he shines in us, we see him.

Yet it is his light. This is what we need. The light of the knowledge of God. In the face of Jesus Christ. To shine in our hearts. To give us this knowledge. To give us this understanding.

[21 : 48] To enable us indeed to let go of our own wisdom. To let go of our own reasoning. And to accept God's word. To accept God's salvation.

With the Holy Spirit whom we have received, To lead us into all truth and scripture, We can attain knowledge and wisdom and understanding. Glory that the most learned, The most intellectual man or woman, In Great Britain tonight or throughout the whole world, Can have.

And thus, We can glory not in our own wisdom. Oh no. But in the Lord. Who is our wisdom. He is our wisdom.

Would you be wise? Unto salvation. Welcome to Christ. Find him. And in finding him, You will find wisdom. Which is better than rubies.

Therefore, Get understanding. Get wisdom. Rest not until you find him. Until you know him. And if you have found him, Rest not until you know him better.

[22 : 58] As God's people, We are commanded to grow in grace. And the knowledge of our saviour Jesus Christ. How can we grow in knowledge? Only in so far as we are in fellowship with him.

And are taught of him. And are willing to let go of our own Self-centred, Self-righteous Ways.

And cast ourselves upon the wisdom of God. Cast ourselves entirely upon him. For wisdom and understanding. In the things of God.

There are people today who believe, And I'm talking of the Reformed Church even, That if you know your Bibles, And if you know your theology, And so on, That's all that is necessary. Well, We wish people would know theology better.

I wish I knew it better myself. And the scriptures also. But, We can know that. And yet lack wisdom. We can know that and lack knowledge.

[24 : 02] Have not the secret of the Lord. Because we have not the fear of God as we ought. We haven't got the key To the understanding of the truth.

Which is the portion of those Who are taught of the Lord. And who are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. And who can go on In the strength of God the Lord, Rejoicing in his salvation.

He is made unto us wisdom. But secondly, He is made unto us righteousness. This is the second blessing That is here brought before us.

Now, If we need wisdom, Surely we need righteousness also. This is the great question Of all. How can a man be just with God?

The word of God says, In thy sight shall no man living be justified. How can a man Be justified before God? Well, this morning, Those of us who are present, Remember, Learn from God's word That by the deeds of the law Shall no man be justified.

[25 : 09] We are condemned. So that, Looking upon Ourselves in the light of these truths, We would despair.

But for Christ. Outside of Christ, There is nothing but despair, my friends. But by receiving Christ, By believing in Christ, What happens?

We are justified. That is what God's word tells us. We are justified by faith in Christ. He is made unto us righteousness, We read here. A complete righteousness.

He was made sin for us, Who knew no sin, That we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And if God the Holy Spirit teaches us Our ignorance, And leads us to the wisdom that is in Christ, So also does he teach us the fact, The truth, That we have no righteousness of our own.

God's word tells us All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. God's word tells us of For example, Isaiah.

[26 : 27] Called of God to be a prophet. As he looks To the Lord Jesus Christ, High lifted up upon a throne. What does he say? Woars me for I am undone, says he. I have nothing.

I am nothing. And that is what is true of all of us. But, This is what is so wonderful.

He of God is made unto us righteousness. He is the end of the law. That is by fulfilling its requirements For righteousness to them that believe.

He is the end of the law. He has fulfilled the requirements of the law For us. And so as we believe in him, We have righteousness. He is a righteousness.

He brought in an everlasting righteousness Whom God has sent forth to be a propitiation Through faith in his blood To declare his righteousness For the remission of sins. Remember today we thought upon that also.

[27 : 30] Oh my friends, Christ is our righteousness. What glorious righteousness is ours. None other than the righteousness of Christ. God has provided a righteousness. God proclaims a righteousness.

God imparts a righteousness. Imputes righteousness. And to those that believe. My friends, Have you received it?

This righteousness. Do you trust in it? Can you say, Surely in Jehovah have I righteousness and strength? Oh, you say, That is my great question. That's what I wonder.

Do I have the righteousness Spoken of here? Or am I still dwelling upon A living, A life of deceit? And going through life With something that is not sufficient?

I'm afraid I don't have this righteousness. You say, I don't doubt the sufficiency Of the righteousness of Christ. But is it mine?

[28 : 30] Am I clothed in that righteousness? Well, I ask you this question. Do you flee to him for refuge? Are you unwise in your own estimation?

Or do you put yourself on a pedestal And look down at the other man Or woman and say, Oh, they are nothing. They don't know anything. I know everything. Now the child of God doesn't speak like that. The child of God is one who knows Himself or herself as Having nothing, Being nothing, And particularly having no righteousness of my own, No wisdom of my own, But I come to him for wisdom.

I come to him for understanding. I run to him for my righteousness. Do you flee to him for refuge, In other words? To whom else shall I go? Or can we go?

Thou hast the words of eternal life. Do you trust in him? Have you revoked, As it were, Your own righteousness? Have you cast it away As something that is futile?

If so, Then you have this righteousness. He is made unto us righteousness. God, The righteous one, Has sent Christ, The righteous one, Into the world, To work out our righteousness for us.

[29 : 46] And that robe of righteousness, He wrought out by his perfect life of love and devotion to God, And his death on the cross, He imputes to us by faith. He took, God imputed our sins to him, He took our sins upon him, But he now imputes righteousness to us.

He is made unto us righteousness. Jehovah said, Can you? Jehovah our righteousness. But there is a third blessing spoken of here, Which is sanctification.

And you can rest assured of this, My friend, When Christ is made wisdom to you, He will also be made righteousness. And when we make righteousness, He will be made sanctification.

God, The Holy Spirit, Has come to dwell in the hearts, Of all who are justified.

And as he has come to dwell in our hearts, He has come to dwell there as the spirit of holiness. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, He is none of his.

[30 : 52] He is our sanctification. We have no sanctification of our own. Now do we believe, As some do, That as righteousness is imputed to us, So sanctification is imputed to us.

Well there is a sense in which we must accept, That if we have Christ, We have all of Christ.

We have his righteousness. We have his holiness. But we cannot speak of, Sanctification, As that which is imputed. Because sanctification is something, That is subjective.

It is something that is wrought in us. It is a work of God's free grace wrought in us. Justification is an act, Completed once for all.

It is a forensic act, That occurs out with us, If you like, Because it is God, Who declares the soul just.

[32 : 11] But sanctification is a work in us, That begins, The moment we are justified, And accepted, As righteous in God's sight. It is something internal, It is something subjective.

And it is something that is progressive. On account of God's spirit dwelling in us, And the graces of the spirit working in us, We bear the fruits of the spirit.

Now I think this is, Where we can find the answer to the question, Where can I see, Whether I am being sanctified or not? Or how can I accept, How can I accept, The doctrine of progressive sanctification?

Well we must accept it, In the light of the fruits of the spirit in us. Because without the fruits of the spirit, We are none of his. And if we have the Holy Spirit, We must have the fruits of the spirit.

And in the fruits of the spirit, You see the progression of the work of sanctification. Now I believe, That if the believer is honest with himself or herself, In this life, They will notice and see, Certain things through of themselves, As the years pass, That were not through of them, When they were initially converted.

[33 : 24] And in particular, In the light of the truth of God, That tells us, What the fruits of the spirit are. What are the fruits of the spirit? Well we all know, That in the light, As they are brought to us, In the epistle to the Galatians.

Where we read of the fruits of the spirit, As love, joy, peace and so on. Now, He is our sanctification, In that he has come to dwell in us, In the person of the Holy Spirit.

It is, The Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ, Whom we either have or have not, If we have him, Then we are his. If we have not him, We are none of his.

But if we have, We have the fruits of the spirit, And we live in the spirit, We walk in the spirit, We worship in the spirit, And we are being prepared thereby, For that place, Where there is nothing that defile us.

Where, And you will notice, Three particular characteristics, Of that place, Where the saints, Are to be forever with the Lord.

[34 : 39] They are these. There, There will be nothing but love, And joy, And peace. And, Here, On earth, The Holy Spirit has implanted, The graces of love, Joy, And peace, The fruits, Of the spirit, In us.

And these, Are maturing in us. Oh, There are many others also, But these predominantly. And as these mature in us, We are maturing, Thereby, In being prepared, For that place, Where there is nothing but love, And joy, And peace.

And ultimately, All the rest that defiles, Will be taken away. We are vessels, In which God the Holy Spirit dwells.

And gradually, The vessel, Into which God the Holy Spirit has come to dwell, Is being purified, And sanctified, And cleansed, So that ultimately, All the dross, All that is defiled, That defiles, Is being, Washed out, As it were.

We are being emptied of that, And filled, With that, Which is pleasing to God, And beneficial to us for time, But particularly, For eternity.

[36 : 12] But there is one final blessing, That we need, And desire to be in Christ, What is that redemption? And one might say, Well surely that ought to have come first of all, Because after all, Being redeemed, Is what we are first of all conscious of, Before we know anything about being justified, Or sanctified.

This is what I need, I cried out for, When I cried out for salvation, I wanted to be redeemed. Well my friend, If you are justified, If you are, Being sanctified, Then indeed you are redeemed.

It is on account of I being redeemed. But redemption here, Taken in its context, Taken in its general sense, And comprehensive sense, The word, Includes, All that went before.

That is, It includes wisdom, Righteousness, And sanctification. But taken in its context, It has to do, With future redemption. You see, We need redeeming every day, As it were.

And you know that, Since you were converted, Since you were redeemed, God has redeemed you, From many, A danger, From many a pitfall, And you've gone astray, Like a lost sheep.

[37 : 23] You went away from God, And you did your own thing, But God brought you back, Again and again. But, There is a future redemption, Awaiting us, On account of having been redeemed, And that is, The redemption, Spoken of in God's word, Which has to do with, Our future state.

We are waiting for the adoption, To wit, What? The redemption of the body. The redemption of the body, The redemption of the soul, Out of this world, And the uniting again, Of body and soul, In that final consummation, Of the redemption of God's people, When Christ shall come again, To take us to be with himself.

The body in the meantime, Is sown in corruption, That it will be raised, A glorious, Spiritual body, Incorrupt. And Christ, Is our redemption, He is the first fruits, From the dead, He is the resurrection, And the life, And his resurrection, Is the assurance of our resurrection, Because we shall all ultimately, Go to be with the Lord, Which is far better.

There are those who have gone before us, And there's a sense in which, We are longing, To the day when we shall see them again, When we shall see Christ as he is, When they and we, Like us shall be united, Body and soul, To praise the Lord forever, Singing the praises of him, Who washed us and cleansed us, From our sins, In his own body and the tree.

Now you see my friends, There is this redemption, That is ours in Christ, We are redeemed in him already, But there is a future redemption, That is already ours in Christ, It is all in Christ, Everything is in Christ, Wherefore, He that glorieth, Let him glory in the Lord.

[39 : 15] Why do we bother with ourselves at all, With other people? Why do we not go around, Praising the Lord continually? As we ought to, Because he is our all, He is our everything. May God bless his word to us, Let us pray.

O grant us in thy mercy this night, The grace whereby we may ever praise thee, We thank thee that although we are unwise, Christ is our wisdom, We are unrighteous, He is our righteousness, We are unholy, He is our sanctification, There is much from which we need to be redeemed, But he is our redemption.

In all this we see Christ, In his offices, In that glorious relationship, Which he stands to his people, As prophet to instruct, As priest to intercede, And apply his righteousness, And our sanctification, And as king to redeem us, For we glory tonight, In all that Christ is, In all that he has been, And shall be, May he confess us to all of us, And pardon us for Jesus' sake, Amen.