TITLE: Our Positioning “In Christ”

TEXT: Gal. 3:26-29; 2nd Tim. 3:16-17& 2:11-12;

Judg. 4:4-5; Mica 6:4; Ex.15:20; 2nd kings 22:14;

Luke 2:36-38; Acts 21:8-9; Gal.2:20; Phil. 3:8-14

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about our position “in Christ”. The position that each of us is to take as a Christian.

 Do you realize that as a Christian, that each of us has a position we are to take in our relationship with Christ? And that position is to position ourselves “in Christ”.

 (I will explain as we go along)

Paul in speaking to the Church…

**Gala 3:26 (NIV) You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,**

**27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

**28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

**29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Let’s look at this first portion of this Scripture..

**3:26 (NIV) You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

 Paul is speaking specifically to the Church, the Body of Christ here when he says that “**You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus”.**

 Does this mean that once we come to Christ that we all take on the identity of sons as in males? Is Paul talking about gender here?

Of course not..

 The word Translated sons in the NIV is translated Children in the kjv.

The Greek word is:

**5207 huios {hwee-os'}**

**1) a son--in a restricted sense, the male offspring**

**1d) in a wider sense, a descendant, one of the posterity of any one,**

**3d) those who revere God as their father, those who in character and life resemble God, those who are governed by the Spirit of God.**

 Obviously, Paul is not using the word **hwee-os**, sons, as a term to describe gender.

 He is using it to describe the position that we have, the position we take up “in Christ”.

 The position of a descendent…one who has the posterity of another… In Christ, We become sons or children of God! We who by Character and life resemble God. We who are governed by the Holy Spirit of God.

 Paul is talking about the inheritance that we will receive as Christians, the inheritance for all those who are found to be “in Christ”.

 In the culture in which Paul lived and was speaking, the male child, the son was the one who received the inheritance.

 Children in general didn’t---sons did.

 The culture of the day was a very male oriented and male dominated culture.. Often women were treated more like property in a lot of cases.

 Do you know what a common morning prayer was for the Jewish male in that day?

 “I thank you God that thou hast not made me a woman”

 (maybe you have prayed this same prayer after spending all night in the delivery room with your wife)

One of The most famous Jewish historians of the day, Josephus once wrote, “Woman is inferior to man in every way”.

 Was this how God thought? NO!

 I don’t believe God was any more in favor of this philosophy then He was for the philosophy of polygamy, of men having multiple wives.

 Scripture says of itself that..

2Tim 3:16 (NIV) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

**17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

 Not every example we find in Scripture is a positive example.

 Some of Scripture, actually a great deal of Scripture, is as much to show us what not to do as what to do.

 David committed adultery and tried to cover it up with murder.

 Jonah tried to run from the plan of God and ended up in the belly of a whale.

 A man named Saul, later to become Paul, persecuted the Church thinking that he was doing service to God!

 Moses struck a rock more times than he was told to because he was angry aand it cost him his entrance into the Promised Land.

 Yet **all Scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man** (or woman) **of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

Was man’s treatment of woman as a second class citizen, as an inferior creation in that society, OK with God?

No!

 And that is one of the things that I believe that God is addressing here in Scripture….

**Gala 3:26 (NIV) You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,**

**27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

**28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

 “In Christ Jesus” there is neither Jew nor Greek! In Christ Jesus there is neither slave nor free, in Christ Jesus there in neither male nor female, but you are all one, all the same in Christ Jesus!

 Paul addresses all three primary aspects of life here. He addresses the three things that Satan will often try to use to try to cause division within the body of Christ.

Race—social class—gender!

 The Devil is using all three of these things for division in the politics of our nation today.

 There is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ Jesus!

 There is no national or racial division in Christ!

 Because All are to become one “in Christ” Jesus!

 There is neither slave nor free in Christ Jesus!

There is no Social division in Christ!

 Because All are to become one “in Christ” Jesus!

 And there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus!

 There is no gender division in Christ!

 Because All are to become one “in Christ” Jesus!

 Paul, the man that God inspired and directed to write these words is thought by many to be the biggest male chauvinist that has ever come down the pike!

 I mean it was Paul who also said that:

**1Tim 2:11 (NIV) A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.**

12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have (usurp) authority over a man; she must be silent.

Was Paul contradicting himself here? Do we see a contradiction in Scripture here?

Not at all!

 Paul was dealing with a particular situation that I believe had more to do with the culture in which he lived then it did with any pronouncement of Gods absolute law!

 In that culture, at that time in the Church’s history women were UN-educated! They didn’t have the opportunities that men had! It was socially unacceptable in the Greek world of the day for a woman to speak out in any public forum.

 I don’t believe that Paul’s not allowing a women to teach in Church in his day had to do with God’s excluding them from it, but that in that society and in that culture it wouldn’t have been received in that setting.

 It would have caused turmoil and been a disruption and probably no one would have been fed regardless of how good the teaching might have been.

 The early Church format was an extension of Judaism. In Judaism the women were not allowed to speak in the synagogue! It would have been disruptive because the women did not even sit on the same side of the church as the men!

 For a woman to even ask her husband a question in that setting would have been disruptive to all.

 For Paul to say that God had excluded women from public service simple because they were women would be to contradict God!

 Deborah…

**Judg 4:4 (NIV) Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.**

**5 She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided.**

Miriam

**Exod 15:20 (NIV) Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing.**

#  Mica 6:4 (NIV) I brought you up out of Egypt

**and redeemed you from the land of slavery.**

**I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam.**

Anna

Luke 2:36 (NIV) There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,

**37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying.**

**38 Coming up to them** (Mary Joseph and baby Jesus) **at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.**

The evangelists, Phillips 4 daughters

Acts 21:8 (NIV) Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.

**9 He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.**

These were all female prophets!

**4398 prophetis {prof-ay'-tis}**

**1) a prophetess**

2) a woman to whom future events or things hidden from others are at times revealed, either by inspiration or by dreams and visions

**3) a female who declares or interprets oracles**

**4396 prophetes {prof-ay'-tace}**

**2) one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his organ or spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration, especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation!**

 Prophecy is one of the gifts that God has administered within His Church, the body of Christ, not so much to foretell the future but forth tell, declare the Word of God!

 **It is one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his organ or spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration….**

Scripture says that God has gifted women at times with this particular gift! There have been women who have been listed among the prophets!

 What Paul is saying in Gal. is that “In Christ” there is to be no division! That “In Christ” there is no Male or female! In Christ there is no slave or free! In Christ there is no Jew or Gentile!

 In Christ these are all to be mute issues! They don’t, or shouldn’t exist “in Christ”!

 So if these things become divisions, become issues within the Church, the body of Christ, then the answer for why they do is relatively simple. We are not truly positioning ourselves “IN Christ”!

 Being “in Christ” is not a one-time thing that happens at salvation. Salvation is when He comes into us and enables us to position ourselves “In Him”. Being “in Christ” is a position that we need to take up every day!

In Gal.2:20 Paul tells us how this is possible and how we take up our position “In Christ”.

 Gala 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

 For us to position ourselves “in Christ” will necessitate our being crucified with Christ!

 What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?

 Crucifixion was a death sentence. No one ever came down from a cross alive.

 Even Jesus was dead when He came down from the cross! It was after 3 days He was raised in the power of the Resurrection and rose from the dead.

 Paul says: **I have been crucified with Christ and I** (Paul) **no longer live!**

 Did Paul literally die with Christ? No! He simply changed positions! He took a new position! He positioned Himself “In Christ!

 No longer, “as I will Lord,” but from now on as You will…

 To be “in Christ”, to take up our position “In Christ” will necessitate our dying to self!

 **I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me! The life that I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me!**

 It is to live our life, not according to our worldly nature and desire and our limited understanding, but to start living our life by the nature and desire and UN-limited understanding of the One who now indwells us!

 To position ourselves “in Christ”, is simply to give Him control of our life. To allow Jesus to live and manifest His life through us as we become obedient to His Word and His will for our life.

 If we place Him in control of our life then it is no longer we who live but it is Jesus living in us! Jesus living His live through us as we allow Him to….

 And in so doing we then become reflections of Jesus to the world around us!

 It is all a matter of positioning!

 When we position ourselves “In Christ” is when we become truly one with Him.

 It is then that we will come to the realization that IN HIM there is no division! There is no Jew or Gentile! There is no slave or free! There is no male or female! But we all have become one with Him in Spirit and in truth and that unites us all together as one mystical, yet glorious body, where He is the head and we are His body parts doing what He, as the head, determines!

 You see, once we take up our position “In Christ”, truly place ourselves ‘”In Him”, there are no black people in the body of Christ, there are no white people in the body of Christ, there are no yellow people in the Body of Christ!

 There are no upper or lower or middle class citizens in the body of Christ!

 There is neither male nor female in the body of Christ, because we have all become one “In Him!” United by the Holy Spirit of God that binds us all together!

 In short, when we really place ourselves “In Christ” then Christ becomes our identity!

 If you want to become the man or woman or child of God that He intends for you to be then place yourself “In Christ”!

 If you want to become the representation of Christ on this planet that He intends for you to be then choose to take up your position “In Christ”!

 If you want to become a dynamic force for the Kingdom of God here on planet Earth and yield the power of God to destroy the strongholds of the enemy in your life, and in the lives of those around you, to literally be used by God to tear down the gates of Hell then make the choice to place yourself “In Christ”!

 Make the choice to saturate yourself with Jesus! To envelop yourself in Jesus! To become so full of Jesus that Jesus drips off of you!

 That is what it means to be “In Christ”. To become so much like Christ that when people see us they see a reflection of Him…

 It is then and only then that we the Church will be able to do what we the Church has been called and commissioned to do----reconcile a lost world to God, to go out into our world and make disciples of entire nations..

 The only way that will ever happen is if we, the Church, truly position ourselves “In Christ”.

 **Phil 3:8 (NIV) What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ**

**9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.**

10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

**11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.**

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

**13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,**

**14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward “in Christ” Jesus.**

 Is it your desire to take hold of that for which God has taken hold of you, then position yourself “In Christ” this morning?

 Is it your desire to be all that God has called you to be?

 Again, salvation is when He places Himself “in us” and whereby He enables us to place ourselves “in Him”.

 If you, like me, find that there are days when we are truly living in Christ but maybe on other days are living far outside of Him. Or even be living In Him at one time of day and outside of Him at another part of the same day.

 Even though God has made it possible for us to always live our lives in Christ our carnal natures make it unlikely that we will.

 So what we find is positioning ourselves “In Christ” is a position that we need to take up and establish, not just on a daily basis, but on a moment by moment basis.

Play Song--We are the body- By Casting Crowns

 Have you chosen to take up your position in Christ?

To become so full of Jesus, so much like Him that our life will be a reflection of Him to the people around us….

 Are we allowing our arms to be His arms reaching out to those around us?

 Are we allowing our hands to be His hands of healing?

 Are we allowing our mouths to proclaim His words to a world that is dying to hear them?

 Are we allowing our feet to be His feet taking us into every corner of our world proclaiming His love?

 For that is what it truly means to position ourselves “In Christ”….

If We Are The Body

By Casting Crowns

It's crowded in worship today
As she slips in
Trying to fade into the faces
The girls' teasing laughter is carrying farther than they know
Farther than they know

CHORUS
But if we are the Body
Why aren't His arms reaching
Why aren't His hands healing
Why aren't His words teaching
And if we are the Body
Why aren't His feet going
Why is His love not showing them there is a way
There is a way

A traveler is far away from home
He sheds his coat
And quietly sinks into the back row
The weight of their judgmental glances tells him that his chances
Are better out on the road

CHORUS
But if we are the Body
Why aren't His arms reaching
Why aren't His hands healing
Why aren't His words teaching
And if we are the Body
Why aren't His feet going
Why is His love not showing them there is a way

Jesus paid much too high a price
For us to pick and choose who should come
And we are the Body of Christ

Chorus (2x)
If we are the body
Why aren't His arms reaching
Why aren't His hands healing
Why aren't His words teaching
And if we are the body
Why aren't His feet going
Why is His love not showing them there is a way

Jesus is the way