

# In Christ, In Philippi

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, over the past three or four weeks, we've been going through a very short series called Christians from Monday to Friday.

And tonight is the final part of this series, which has simply been looking at the fact that our Christian lives are not confined to Sundays.

Our life as followers of Jesus should affect every single thing that we do, whether it's our work, our home, our community involvement, whatever it is.

From Monday to Friday, for every day of our lives, we want a relationship with Jesus to affect everything that we're going to do. So tonight we're going to bring this short series to a conclusion, and we're going to turn back to Philippians chapter one, and we're going to look at two really, two big and important themes that are set before us at the start of that chapter.

Our focus is going to be on the very first verse, Philippians 1 verse one. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 1 : 19 ] These are the kind of verses that it's quite easy to whizz through when you start reading a passage like Philippians, the greeting at the start, which is what these verses contain, can often be something that we read quickly and just move fast.

But that's something we should always be careful of in the Bible, because if we go through something too quickly, we're liable to miss some amazing and important things.

And there's some really amazing and important things in this verse, and in particular, there's something important brought before us by the smallest word on the screen before you.

And that's the tiny little word which says, in. Now in the translation before us there, the ESV, it says to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi.

Now that's an excellent translation, it's very, very clear, but it's not completely literal. And for what I want to talk about tonight, I want us to just be a wee bit literal for a moment.

[ 2 : 22 ] As I'm sure you know, the New Testament was originally written in Greek. Everybody says, when you preach, never, ever, ever mention Greek. Derek says, never mention Greek.

But Derek's in America, so don't tell him. Katina, don't tell him. So there we are. There's the first sentence in Greek.

Okay? I want you to look at that. Don't worry if you can't read Greek, you can read the bit at the bottom. It's transliterated into English. Pas in toys, Haggios, in, Christo, Jesu, toys, Usin, in, Philippios.

Okay? Now what I want you to focus on is two tiny little words that appear twice. Can you see them? There's the word toys that appears twice, that means to the, but it's the other tiny word that appears twice I want to focus on.

It's the wee word, in. And that of course means in. So literally, Philippians 1-1 says to the saints, to all the saints, in Christ Jesus, who are in Philippi.

[ 3 : 29 ] Now in English, we don't really like repeating the same word over and over again. We like to vary words, which is why the ESV uses the more natural English idiom to all the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi.

But literally, it says in twice. And I think that's really important because the Christians to whom Paul was writing were in two places.

They were in Christ Jesus, and they were in Philippi. And that's the two things I want us to focus on tonight, because these truths are very relevant to us as we live our lives as Christians from Monday to Friday.

So first of all, Paul is saying that the saints are in Christ Jesus. That's a phrase that Paul uses again and again. It's telling us about our status as believers.

We are in Christ. You look at various other letters, Corinthians, to those in Christ Jesus. Ephesians, he's blessed us in Christ Jesus. Colossians, to the saints and faithful brothers, in Christ.

[ 4 : 36 ] At Colossae, when Paul talks about Christians, more often than not, he describes them as those who are in Christ. It's the same in Philipians. It's the same in Thessalonians.

You see it again and again and again. Now, that phrase in Christ, and we tend to give that a technical term. We call it union with Christ.

We say that a Christian is united to Christ. And when you see that little phrase in Christ, I would want you to always think in terms of union with Christ, the fact that we are united to Christ.

That's very important. But of course, we have to ask, what does that mean? What does it mean to be in Christ? What does it mean to be united to Christ? Well, a key passage that explains this is Romans 6.

It says, for if we've been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

[ 5 : 44 ] For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, been raised from the dead, will never die again.

Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life He now lives, He lives to God. So you must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Paul is saying that we are united to Christ in His death, and we are united to Christ in His resurrection. That is really what Christianity is all about.

And if somebody was to ask you the question, what is New Testament Christianity all about? A very good answer would be to say it's all about being united to Jesus Christ.

That's the core of Christianity. It's the heart of the Gospel that we are united to Christ. And the way it works is the fact that Christ has acted on behalf of His people.

[ 6 : 49 ] The whole biblical storyline rests on this principle. Back at the very beginning, Adam acted on our behalf and he failed. And his failure had implications for all of humanity.

He fell, we fell with him. But Christ has come as the second Adam. He's come, if you like us, Adam in reverse. He's come to put it right.

And he's come to unite himself to us. So he's made himself like us. He's taken our nature. That's what we talk about when we talk about the incarnation when Jesus became a human.

He became like us. He acts on our behalf. And so he goes all the way to the cross, paying the penalty for our sin and our failure.

He acts as a new representative for us. And he puts right what went wrong. He takes responsibility to stand in our place.

[ 7 : 47 ] He guarantees that all the requirements of obedience are met. And by faith, we are united to him, which of course is why Christianity revolves around faith.

So by faith, we are united to Jesus Christ. The death that he died becomes our death to sin. The penalty that he pays pays our penalty.

The new life that he has through the resurrection becomes our new life. Of course, Paul can explain it far better than I can. He says, I have been crucified with Christ.

It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Now that's a very important point, because that's how we're saved through our connection to Christ. A lot of people can think about God, but they don't really put Jesus Christ into the equation.

[ 8 : 54 ] So people will believe in God and they will want a relationship with God, and they'll think that I can have some kind of connection with God. But Jesus is not really that important and doesn't need to come into it.

But that is simply something that we cannot do. Because absolutely everything in terms of restoring a relationship with God is dependent on being in Christ.

You cannot have a connection to God unless it is through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only mediator between God and men. That's what it's all about, being united to Jesus.

And the Bible gives us lots of wonderful images about what this union is like. John 15 talks about a vine and branches. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches, we are united together in that way. Colossians chapter one talks about the head and the body. Jesus is the head, we are the body, we are united in that way. Ephesians talks about a building and a cornerstone. So we are all different parts of the building, but it's Christ who holds it all together.

[ 9 : 58 ] We are united in that way. Later on in Ephesians, the image is described in terms of a husband and a wife. We are joined together and united in that way.

So if you are a Christian, you are his body, you're his bride, his branches, his friend, his brother, his sister, you're no longer in the realm of sin, you are in Christ Jesus.

And that wee word in is wonderful. As I'm sure you all know, it's a preposition. So it quite simply tells you where you are and it tells you where you aren't.

So I've got a very complicated diagram for you to look at here. Here is a box. And if you think about the box, you could apply all sorts of different prepositions to that box which will describe your relationship to that box.

So you can say that you're near the box. You could say that you're at the box. You could say that you're on the box. You could say you're with the box. You could say you're beside the box. These are all describing different aspects of being somehow connected to the box.

[ 11 : 04 ] They're all different, interesting prepositions. But in is different. Because in is in, which do you know what I mean?

If you are in something, you are bound up with it and connected to it in an altogether different way. So when you become a Christian, you're not near Christ.

You're not at Christ. You're not on Christ. You're not with Christ. You're not beside Christ. You're in Christ. And that conveys the deepest level of connection because you cannot get more closely bound up with Jesus than to be in Him.

And one of the wonderful things about being in something is that you remain there no matter which way you turn. And there's a wee image of the security you have as a believer.

If you're near Jesus, you could come close to Him and then you could maybe turn and wander away. If you're beside Jesus, you could be close to Him, but you could turn and then you could wander away.

[ 12 : 16 ] But if you're in, no matter how much you turn around and get lost and think and do stupid things, you can't actually escape from being in Him and under His care. You're utterly secure, utterly safe, utterly bound up in Him.

And so our status as being in Christ tells us where we now are. We are in Him as part of His body. But it also tells you where you are not.

Because the fact that we are in Christ means that we are no longer in the realm of sin. We're no longer strangers. We're no longer enemies. We are no longer lost.

If we are in Christ, we are utterly bound up with Him. And all of this ties in with another important word that Paul uses in Philippians 1, because he talks about all...

When he addresses the Philippians, he talks about them as saints. And that's a very important word. He addresses to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi.

[ 13 : 19 ] Now we're familiar with the word saints, but we probably tend to use it in a way that Paul doesn't. Because today we use the word saint to describe a particularly great Christian.

So Paul himself is known as Saint Paul. Colomba is known as Saint Colomba. Very important saints are referred to... Very important Christians are referred to with this title, saint.

But notice, look at that verse because it says something really interesting. It says Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi.

So according to Paul, the saints are all the Christians to whom he is writing. And not only that, the big names, the famous names in that verse, Paul and Timothy, they are not described as saints. They're described as servants, which raises a very important point that in God's kingdom every believer is a saint.

[ 14 : 24 ] But if you want to be really important, you should become a servant. So that word saint applies to all believers.

But again we have to ask what does that mean? Well the word saint is a really interesting word because it comes from the word holy. So we use the word sanctification, which comes from the Latin word sanctus, which means holy.

And when we talk about sanctification, we could really be talking about holinessification, if you like. And so a saint is simply a holy one. And someone who's being sanctified is someone who's becoming more and more holy.

And that word holy means to be set apart. A saint is one who has been set apart. So when we are saved, we are transferred from one realm to another.

We're transferred from the unholy realm of sin into God's holy kingdom, from darkness to light, from death to life. And so when we are saved, a change takes place.

[ 15 : 33 ] By nature we are in a realm of darkness, in a realm of sin, but through faith in Christ Jesus we're transferred into God's kingdom to a new and different way.

So if you're a Christian, you're a saint. If you're a saint, you have been set apart. You've been placed in a new realm, in a new place.

Where is that place? It's in Christ. So the word saint tells you that you've been set apart. The phrase in Christ tells you where you have been set apart to.

In other words, we're saints because we're in a new place. We are in Christ. And all of this highlights the immense blessings that are ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

The fact that we are united to Him, it tells you some amazingly important things. Think of how precious that makes you as a Christian.

[ 16 : 35 ] If you think about the unions that we have in terms of our human relationships, if you think about the connection between a husband and a wife, or between a parent and a child, I think one of the only ways you can describe the depth of connection is to say that that person becomes part of you.

It's very hard to describe, but I think I'm sure everybody here will know what I mean, that somebody who you are united to in marriage, or somebody who you are united to as a parent, it's as though that person is part of you.

And if that person wasn't there, then part of you is missing. The doctrine of union with Christ tells us that that's how Jesus views you.

And that is utterly astonishing. And so if Christ lost you, which He can't, because that's impossible, but supposing He could, then something essential to Him would be missing.

That's how incredibly precious you are to Him. Think of the protection that it gives you to be in Christ. You think of that box, you are in Christ.

[ 17 : 50 ] So if the devil wants to get to the Christian, he has to go through Jesus Christ. And that's impossible. And think of the extraordinary privileges that we have.

So if we are united to Jesus, it means that everything that is His is your. That's why the Bible describes us as joint heirs with Christ.

So we have a share in His kingdom, in His love, in His glory, in His family, in His righteousness, in His peace, in His access to the Father.

You think of everything that the Bible describes about Jesus. You are united to Him in all of that. A great example is the passage we read in the morning as our call to worship in Philippians 2.

You read about what it says there about Jesus. Been found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death. So you think of Jesus, He comes down from heaven, He takes up human form.

[ 18 : 54 ] He humbles Himself, obeys God, which involves a downward path all the way to death, even death and across. From that, there's a path of exaltation where God has highly exalted Him, placed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

You are united to Jesus in everything that that describes. So that death, that resurrection and all the power that lies behind that, you are united to that.

He is Lord and you are His. And it's very important to remember this in terms of our Christian self-esteem, because so often we can look at ourselves and we can feel so easily discouraged.

We look at ourselves and we think, you know, we're worthless, we're useless, we muck up so much, we're so far from what we should be in and our identity can be so clouded by our failings and our weaknesses.

But of course, all of that is theologically untrue. Because your identity, if you are a Christian, is in Christ.

[ 20 : 17 ] So if you want to look at yourself and see what you truly are, then you can only do that by looking at Jesus Christ.

Because that's really where you are. You are united to Him in an unbreakable relationship. When we go through our lives from Monday to Friday as Christians, we can be discouraged and frustrated and we feel that often we're mucking up.

And sometimes we can come to the conclusion where we say, I'm not in a good place. Maybe you've used that phrase yourself, you think yourself, I'm not in a good place. And I can understand why people say that and there's an element in which that's a fair comment because sometimes we do get into bad habits, we sometimes do things that are unhelpful.

But there is an important sense in which that statement is not true. Because a Christian can never really say, I'm not in a good place.

All a Christian can really say is, I've forgotten the amazing place where I really am. Because you are united to Jesus.

[ 21 : 33 ] And of course there's an ethical application for that in terms of our lives because our union with Christ should really motivate us to shun sin. We go through life as Monday to Friday as Christians.

We do that united to Christ. So where you go on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday, you're going to be taking Jesus with you.

You're carrying His name with you. And what we want is to reach the point where we will always say to ourselves, I am united to Christ.

How could I sin against Him? How could I speak like that? How could I go there and do this? How could I do that sort of thing? It's so important that we remember how bound, how closely bound up we are to Jesus.

And this is of course one of the situations where theology and feelings can come into conflict.

Because often we feel like Jesus is far away and often we can think to yourself, well Thomas, this sounds all a wee bit over the top.

[ 22 : 36 ] Surely the exalted Jesus who is sitting at the right hand of God the Father and who reigns over all the universe, surely I'm not that close to Him.

Surely I'm not that important to Him. Surely the connection cannot be that close.

Well if you struggle with this concept, I want you to listen to the words that Jesus himself prayed in John 17. He said, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

So that's you, every single Christian in here, that they may all be one just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they may also be in us.

So that the world may believe that you've sent me. The glory that you've given me, I have given to them. That they may be one even as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may be perfectly one.

[ 23 : 41 ] So that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Now that is utterly amazing.

She asked Jesus, what's your dream, Lord Jesus, what's your ambition, what's your goal? It's to have people like you in me to be bound up in a way that is so incredibly close.

And that's what we all need. And for those who are maybe not yet a Christian, that's what Jesus wants for you. That's what the gospel offers you.

Jesus is saying, you can be united to me and everything that I have done. That's how Christianity works.

That's what the gospel is offering you. We are in Christ. But I also want us to look at the other in that we find in this verse.

[ 24 : 52 ] Here it is in Christ, but they are also in Philippi, which is kind of really different, but really interesting and really important. Here's a little test.

Where's Philippi? Can you see it? Who knows where Philippi is? Can you find it there on the map? Yes? No? Yes? Okay.

It's way up top left corner in the orange bit. You can see it there. The writing is very, very small, but it's way up there just in the northeastern part of Macedonia.

And that, of course, is the physical geographic location of these believers. This, of course, is the first church that Paul himself planted in mainland Europe, an act of chapter 16 on his second

missionary journey.

And Paul's got a huge affection for this church. We read about how he says how he yearns for them with all the affection in Christ, with all the affection of Christ Jesus.

[ 25 : 50 ] But I want us to just to recognize the fact that these Christians are in a specific location. They are in Philippi. Why is that so important? Well, I think there's two things that are particularly important.

First, it teaches a very important lesson about the church. Paul talks about the saints, the ones who are in Philippi. But implicitly behind that is the fact that they're saints in other places.

And as Paul writes to these saints, he's highlighting the fact that, yes, they are in a specific location, but they are part of a wider body of believers who altogether make up one church.

So Paul's in Rome as he writes this letter. But as he writes to these believers, he's showing that there is a wonderful connection that exists across the Christian church. In fact, one of the reasons why he wrote this letter is because the Philippians had sent them a gift and he wanted to return his thanks to them.

And so as we read the Old Testament, we see different churches scattered in different places, but they did not exist as isolated independent bodies. There's a strong close connection between them.

[ 26 : 59 ] They always want to keep in touch with one another. And it's important to remember that when Paul thinks about all these different churches, he didn't think of a church in Rome.

He didn't think of a church in Philippi and another church in places like Ephesus. He thought of one church with branches in different locations.

And of course, that reminds us of a very important biblical principle which nowadays, I suppose, seems long forgotten and is maybe almost a wee bit controversial.

But we must remember and recognize that separate denominations is an unbiblical concept.

And I know that it's complicated and I don't want to sound like I'm being sort of overly simplistic, but we should always remember that our baseline view of church, our foundational ecclesiology, our foundational understanding of the church is that there is one church and that division, isolation, separation, hostility is wrong.

[ 28 : 22 ] That's the biblical position and that's what we want to always maintain. And of course, that's backed up by what we've just been discussing. Because if we are in Christ, if you are in Christ, if St. Columbus Free Church are in Christ, of course, so is every other believer on this planet.

And so we're not just connected to him, we're connected to one another through our union with Christ. That should shape the way we view one another, that should shape how we view the church, and that should always be our foundational position.

And it's reminding us of the wonderfully important point that Christianity is ultimately not about me or you, it's about us.

We are not set apart in order to be isolated. We are set apart to come together as a new people, a new kingdom, a new family.

The church of God is one church. But as Paul is telling us, different parts of that church are located in different places.

[ 29 : 35 ] So although our ecclesiology is collective in the sense that there is, that we emphasize the unity of the church, there's also the specific emphasis on the fact that the church is found in particular places.

And so when Paul wrote to the church here, he was writing to that part of the one church that wasn't Philippi. And we today are part of that one church that is here in Edinburgh.

And we are here to serve as part of that worldwide body. And that leads us on to the second thing I want to say about the phrase, in Philippi. And that little phrase, that word in, in Philippi, is really important not just in terms of ecclesiology, but also in terms of our mission.

Because these believers were in Philippi. In other words, they were in a specific location surrounded by people who desperately needed to hear the gospel. They were in a mission field. Philippi was a mission field. And Paul is emphasizing to them that they're not to live in isolation from the West, rest of the world. They were in Philippi, which means they had a huge opportunity to witness and to serve there.

[ 30 : 46 ] And of course, exactly the same is true of you and me. Because we are in Edinburgh. We are in Scotland, and Scotland is a massive mission field.

And this is where we come back to that little word, saints, again. Because you, as a Christian, you as Christians, you are saints in Edinburgh.

And this is where I want us to kind of conclude our study on Christians from Monday to Friday.

Going through this week, you are going to be saints in Edinburgh, or wherever it is that you'll spend Monday to Friday this week.

And that means that the way we live must reflect that. If we are in Edinburgh, then people can see us.

People can observe the way we live our lives. And our conduct must be such that they can see that we are saints.

[ 31 : 50 ] Paul speaks of that in verse 27. He says, let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. How is that for a challenge from Monday to Friday?

That your manner of life would be worthy of the gospel. And that's why, as Christians, we live with this crucial balance between being in the world so that we're in touch with people, that we're in contact with people, but at the same time, we have got to be different.

We are saints, so we are set apart. We belong to a different way. So the rest of the world is here.

Saints have been transferred to a different place. We are now different.

And we have to show that we are different. We have to show that we belong to a different way. So if the world is going to be selfish, we are not going to be. If the world is going to be greedy, we are not going to be.

If the world is going to be easily angered, we are not going to be. If the world is going to do what is right in its own eyes, we are not going to be. Our conduct must be different.

[ 32 : 57 ] Our faith and our union with Christ has got to shape the way we live, from Monday to Friday. But people need to be able to see that we are different.

And that's why we've got to be in the world. Can't separate ourselves. That's why Monday to Friday is so important, because that's where you're going to be seen, and that's where the contact is going to be made.

So we've got to be involved. We've got to be in contact through work and studies and community and whatever else we're involved in. To be in the streets and clubs and activities and hobbies of Edinburgh, we've got to be in the workplaces, in the lecture theatres, in all of these places.

We've got to be there. If we keep our distance, people are not going to see what we're like. They're probably going to jump to the wrong conclusions about us. But what we must remember, and the rule that we have to take with us, is that we need to be involved, but be different.

Be involved with the world around you, but be different. And both of these are essential. We must not neglect either. We're never going to reach the people around us if we keep ourselves separate, if we have no contact Monday to Friday.

[ 34 : 14 ] If we stand back and give the impression that we're just superior, then it's only going to alienate people. But neither are we going to have any influence on people around us if we involve ourselves, and we're no different.

If we go about Monday to Friday like everybody else goes about Monday to Friday, then they're not going to see anything. And so go for it.

Go for it. If you like football, be in the football team, but be different. Don't swear. Don't curse. Don't have a go at somebody who makes a mistake.

If you like to sing in a choir, or if you like to play tennis, or if you like to go and involve yourself in a youth club or whatever it may be, go and do it, but be different.

If you're going to have friends who are non-Christians, be their friend. Go for it, but be different.

Share their hobbies, share their interests, have fun, laugh together, but be different.

[ 35 : 10 ] If your friends are going to step over the line of appropriate behavior, be different and stand back. Be involved in people's lives. Be involved in this community.

Be involved in your workplace. Be in Edinburgh, but always, always, always be a saint while you're doing it, because that's what you are.

You're a saint in Christ Jesus, and you're a saint in Edinburgh.

And that's really what we need to take with us, I think, into Monday and Friday every week. We need to remember that we are united to Jesus Christ.

Remember the security and the blessing and the hope and the comfort that that brings you, like nothing else. But Jesus needs you in Edinburgh, needs you on Monday to Friday in your job, in your

hobbies, in your school.

[ 36 : 22 ] That's where he needs you. And so by his grace, we want to always live every moment of our lives, remembering that we're in Christ, that we're in Edinburgh, that it's all for him.

Let's pray. Dear God, our Father in heaven, we thank you so much for the amazing privilege of being in Christ, and for the security and comfort and hope that that gives us, and for the amazing privilege of having that bond with you that is so close.

But we are also conscious that just as the believers we read about were in Philippi, so now we are here in Edinburgh, we are here in Scotland.

And Lord, we pray that you'd use us. And we pray that you'd have mercy on this city and on this nation. And we pray that we would go from Monday to Friday every week, living in a way that shows that we are different, that shows that we love you and that we love others.

And we pray that through all of that you would be bringing more and more and more people into your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.