

"Because of Jesus"

Where would we be? Where would we be? Where would we be without Jesus? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today let's look at the important role that Jesus has in our lives!

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures are how God reveals Himself to us today; and for this reason, we take time to examine them closely. We want to know everything that we can about the God who created us, sustains us, loves us, and desires to save us eternally. Our life, our identity, and our future are wholly dependent upon God. And every breath that you take, every drop of water you drink, and every bite of food that you eat comes from what He provides. Oh, every blessing of life comes from God. And of course we want to know all about Him. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

One can only imagine how different life would be without Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God, the Lord, the Messiah, the Christ, the light of the world, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Alpha and Omega, the Holy One, the Son of Man, the Word, the Savior, the Advocate, the Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God, the Great High Priest, the I AM, the Shepherd and Guardian of your Souls, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the pioneer and the perfecter of our faith, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. No person who ever lived is like Jesus; no blood but His blood can cleanse you from sin; no words but His words will judge you on the last day; no power but His power can raise you up on the last day; and no way but His way can lead you to the Father in heaven. You may meet some impressive people, but no one compares to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is love; He is wisdom; He is kindness; and He is truth!

If you want to study more, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on line at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Colossians 1:13 to 18, and then we'll consider the importance of Jesus in our lives.

Our scripture reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Colossians. Chapter 1 verses 13 to 18.

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Oh Father we pray that You will help us to put the Lord Jesus Christ first in our lives because we know that we made by Him and made for Him and may You will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Does it matter to you whether Jesus came into the world? Should it matter? Well, my answer is yes, it must matter for many reasons. First, because of Jesus, I know something about God. Matthew tells us much about the birth of Jesus in Matthew 1:18 to 23: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not

wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.' Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God with us.'"

Jesus is indeed "God with us." We can know what God is like by looking at Jesus, His Son. John 1:14 to 15 says about Jesus, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Now someone once asked a preacher why John called Jesus Christ "the Word." Well it seemed a strange description to him. Well the preacher answered, "Words are the means that permit us to communicate with others, John used it to show that Jesus Christ is the only means whereby God chose to communicate with man." Jesus Christ, then, is God's speech or God's discourse to man. John wrote in John 1 verse 18, that "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." The New American Standard says, that "He has explained Him." Now Jesus explains to us the character and the nature of God.

The Lord Jesus said in John 14 verses 6 to 7, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him." Now because God sent Jesus into this world, we can know the way to the Father, we have life in His name, and we can know the truth about God. Jesus is how the Father speaks to us today. Hebrews 1 verses 1 to 3 says, that "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the power of His word."

Second, because of Jesus, I know what love truly is all about. 1 John 4 verses 7 to 10 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. (Now) Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (And) In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. (Now) In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Now the Father's willingness to sacrifice His Son Jesus and the Lord Jesus' willingness to bear the cross for our sins reveals the love of God in clear and touching ways. Now no one has ever loved you like Jesus loves you or died for your sins as Jesus did. No one else could.

The love of Jesus goes far greater than being our atoning sacrifice. You see Jesus understands us and allows us to approach Him with confidence, even in times of weakness. Heb. 4 verses 15 to 16 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and (may) find grace to help in time of need." Now not only can we approach the Lord Jesus, our high priest, we can find grace to help, to help you and me, in dealing with our temptations. Jesus is doing everything He can to help us. He wants us in heaven with Him.

Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed, and Peter did indeed deny the Lord. But I want you see what the Lord said to Peter, even knowing that Peter would

deny him. Luke 22 verses 31 to 32 says, "Simon, Simon, (now that's Peter) behold, Satan (has) demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, (but then Jesus says) but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Have you considered that even when you fail, the Lord Jesus is praying for you? He loves you.

Third, because of Jesus, I can have my sins erased. I can be clean and justified by the blood of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist said in John 1:29 when he "saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" Jesus sacrificed His body on the cross so that we might be saved from our sins. In the passage we read Colossians 1:13 to 14, it says that God "has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Jesus' blood, not silver or gold and not some kind of precious metal, is what redeemed us from sin, His blood. Because Jesus suffered, and shed His blood, we don't have to suffer the consequences of our sin.

The Lord Jesus gave you and me a second chance, and He erased all the guilt of our past, and He allowed us to start over as a new person, born again. And all this took place when we were baptized into Christ. When we were buried with Him, raised with Him, and received the newness of life. Oh, what a blessing! When I was baptized into Christ, I put on Christ according to Galatians 3 verses 26 to 27. And from that time forward the Lord regarded me as a child of God.

Now Jesus cares about everybody, and even people that are hard to love. You remember He went to the house of the tax collector Zacchaeus, who may have been the most hated man in Jericho. He talked to the woman at the well who had married five times and was living with a man. He saved Saul of Tarsus, who was the foremost of sinners, and He did this to show His perfect patience to those who have sinned against Him. Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul. And he said in 1 Timothy 1 verses 15 to 16, "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, (and then he said) of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life." Yes Jesus is the champion of grace and He's also the champion of opportunities to start over.

And once we become Christians, the Lord Jesus doesn't abandon us. No, He is with us every step of our Christian lives. 1 John 1 and verse 7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, (then) we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." The blood of Jesus is continually cleansing the Christian who walks in the light. Now, nobody can be perfectly sinless, but walking in the light means that we follow Jesus, and we're forsaking our sins. Again, 1 John chapter 1 verse 9 says, that "If we confess our sins, (then) He is faithful and (He's righteous or) just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now Jesus doesn't save us and then forget us. No! Hebrews 7 and verse 25 says, "Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Jesus does indeed intercede for you and me as we draw near to God in obedience and in love.

Fourth, because of Jesus, we can live forever as an heir of God. Some people sadly imagine there is nothing beyond this life on earth. But some say even that there is no resurrection. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20 and verse 32, "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Those who are cleansed by the blood of Christ do indeed have an inheritance in heaven.

Peter explains our inheritance in 1 Peter 1 verses 3 to 5, when he says "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a

living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, and it's kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." According to God's great mercy, our inheritance is kept in heaven for us, reserved for us. God is getting us ready for heaven and getting a home in heaven ready for us. We have a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.

Paul speaks of this change from perishable to imperishable, when Jesus returns to the earth at the second coming. He said in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 50 to 54, "I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" I tell you Christ will raise His people from the dead, change their perishable bodies into imperishable ones and take them home to heaven. Christ conquered death, and we can also through His power. To live in heaven our bodies must be changed, and Christ prepares us for eternal life!

Now at the end of his life Paul could say with confidence in 2 Timothy 4 verses 6 to 8, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." Christ will not merely give us a home with Him but will award to us a crown of righteousness and a crown of life. I look to the day that God says, "Well done, good and faithful (servant or) slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Oh my friend what will He say to you? Will He say well done? Let's pray together. Oh Heavenly Father help us in every way to love You with all our heart and soul. To live according to Your will and to walk in Your ways. Father we pray that we'll come to put Jesus first in everything. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It's in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus we pray, Amen.

When this life is over, the faithful will spend eternity with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven will be a place of joy and peace. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 1 says, "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, (that) we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Well now that's speaking of the new, glorified body that you'll enjoy in a place that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Because of Jesus, we can live forever and ever in heaven. Philippians 3:20 to 21 says, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."

Now sadly, some will miss heaven, because they reject or ignore the Lord Jesus. Because they didn't believe Him or His words, they won't enjoy His promises. When you ignore or reject the Lord, the Lord responds to your decision; and you will face eternal consequences. You cannot ignore or reject Him in this life and expect His grace and blessing in the life to come. Hebrews 10:26 to 27 says, "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries."

Why not rather place your faith in the Lord Jesus and obey Him by repenting of your sins, by confessing Him as the Son of God, and by being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins? Because of Jesus, you have hope and promise. Don't miss out on all the blessings and joy that the Lord Jesus has prepared for you in heaven.

We do hope that today's study has stirred you to consider your soul. And to think about what God says. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, then mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! And we encourage you to subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." There's also, on our website at www.searchtv.org, a schedule of programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.