



## IN CHRIST ALONE

In today's lesson, entitled "**In Christ Alone**", we'll be considering more than one passage of Scripture - but we'll begin with a serious look at **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:13-18** found on page **1797** in the Pew Bibles. The apostle Paul is comparing the new covenant of grace, life, and peace with the old covenant of law, sin, and death when he calls to mind an image from **1000's** of years prior. You can read about it in **Exodus 34**. While the children of Israel waited at the foot of Mt. Sinai, Moses would often ascend to meet with God. The encounter would literally transform his appearance, **causing his face to glow** like a **1000-watt** bulb. Yet, the effect was only temporary, for within a short time after descending the mountain **the radiance would fade**. So, to maintain the visual impact, Moses covered his face so his audience couldn't see the light of his countenance go dim. With that picture now firmly planted in their minds, he writes...

**<sup>13</sup> We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. <sup>14</sup> But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. <sup>15</sup> Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. <sup>16</sup> But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.**" So, it is **in Christ alone that freedom is found**. No system of rules, regulations, or rituals can free us from the consequences, condemnation, and control of sin. As perfect as it is, not even God's law can liberate us from the bondage of guilt and the fear of wrath. We will always fall short and be judged as sinners in need of a savior\_ but thanks be to God that a Savior has been provided! We have been set free from the bondage of fear.

In the first verse of the song by Stuart Townend we sang for communion, it says...

*In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song;  
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
My Comforter, my All in All; Here in the love of Christ I stand.*

No wonder Paul also writes in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:11**: **"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ**. It is in Christ alone our hope is found. In Him alone can we put our trust. In Him alone, can we have assurance. The foundation Paul speaks of is more than a secure financial portfolio. Christ is more than a good beginning for us. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. That's why He can be both cornerstone and capstone. He is my light, my strength, my song.

Speaking of Jesus, the apostle Peter declares in **Acts 4:11-12** that **"He is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."** In Christ alone we find salvation. It's not that He is a "better" savior\_ He is the only Savior.

The next two verses of the song "**In Christ Alone**" declare:

*In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe.  
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save:  
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied,  
For every sin on Him was laid; Here in the death of Christ I live.*



*There in the ground His body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain;  
Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave He rose again!  
And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
For I am His and He is mine - Bought with the precious blood of Christ.*

Jesus was God's one and only begotten Son. That was proven not only by the mighty miracles He performed but by His resurrection from the dead. No one else but Him could qualify to be our substitutionary sacrifice. No one else but Him could satisfy the wrath of God. No one else but Him can justify those who believe - presenting us as pure and innocent in the presence of His Father in heaven.

So Paul concludes in **Galatians 6:14**: <sup>14</sup> **May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.** We will talk more of the Old Rugged Cross next week, but for now, understand that it isn't the wooden structure of execution that gives us reason for our confidence. It is the One who hung from it. For **in Christ alone** we find victory in this world over our perilous passions and destructive desires\_ and that is **reason to boast**

**The concluding verse** of our song says...

*No guilt in life, no fear in death; This is the power of Christ in me.  
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.  
No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand.  
Till He returns or calls me home; Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.*

The idea of boasting seems contrary to the spirit of humility that Christians are to possess. Yet, it is not in ourselves that we boast\_ or in our accomplishments. We boast in Him and His finished work on the cross. We do not place our confidence in our great wisdom or spiritual knowledge, but in the omniscient One who knows all there is to know. We don't boast in our goodness, but in His righteousness. In Christ alone, who conquered sin and death through His sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection, we boast.

And in Him, we can know beyond any shadow of doubt that we are safe and secure, awaiting His return to take us to dwell in eternal glory with the Father. As for me, **in Christ alone my Hope is found.** How about you?