

## **KEY STATEMENTS FOR THE 2023 MEMORIAL DAY CONFERENCE**

**In order to take Christ as everything and gain Him in all things,  
we must learn to continually deny our self and turn to our spirit.**

**We need to be one in soul to enjoy Christ by thinking the one thing,  
by being one with Christ in His inward parts,  
and by allowing God to operate in us  
the willing and the working for His good pleasure.**

**Like Paul, we should aspire to know and experience Christ,  
the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings  
and to be conformed to His death as the mold of the Christian life.**

**We need to be conformed to Christ's death  
so that we may attain to the out-resurrection—  
the only way for the Lord to go on in His recovery,  
the only way to build up His church,  
the only way for the bride to make herself ready,  
and the only way for the Lord to come back.**

**Outline of the Messages  
for the Memorial Day Conference  
May 26-29, 2023**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND ENJOYING CHRIST  
AS REVEALED IN PHILIPPIANS**

Message One

**Taking Christ as Everything to Gain Him  
by Denying Our Self and Turning to Our Spirit**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 16:24; Mark 9:7-8; 2 Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:15a, 16a; Col. 2:16-17

**I. Christ is the desire of God's heart—Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Gal. 1:15a, 16a:**

- A. God's heart's desire is that every person, every matter, and everything in the universe would express Christ; when everything is headed up in Christ, there will be absolute peace and harmony, and everything in the universe will express Christ—Col. 1:15-19; 3:10-11; Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15-16; Isa. 55:11-13.
- B. We exist for the expression of Christ, we preach the gospel for the expression of Christ, our work is for the expression of Christ, and the church is for the expression of Christ—43:7; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:58; John 17:23; Eph. 1:23; 3:19-21.
- C. Christ is the reality of every positive thing in the universe—Col. 2:16-17:
  - 1. The entire universe is a great painting drawn by God that speaks of Christ, describes Christ, and is for the expression of Christ—1:15-17; Psa. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20; Heb. 11:3.
  - 2. Daily we eat and drink Christ, weekly we have completion and rest in Him, monthly we experience a new beginning in Him, and throughout the year He is our joy and enjoyment—Col. 2:16-18a.
- D. We must see and realize inwardly that God does not want anything other than Christ Himself; God's goal in His recovery is to recover Christ as everything to us—1 Cor. 1:9:
  - 1. When Christ enters into us, He not only wants to be our life but also our everything; He is our breath of life (John 20:22), water of life (4:14; 7:37-39), bread of life (6:35, 48), light of life (1:4; 8:12), and abode of life (14:23; 15:1, 4-5).
  - 2. We must walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work by living Christ, growing Christ, expressing Christ, and propagating Christ in every respect—Col. 1:9-10.
  - 3. We must allow God to work Christ into us to such an extent that He is everything to us—our exceeding joy and our exceedingly great reward—Eph. 3:16-19; Psa. 43:4a; Gen. 15:1; John 15:11; Rom. 14:17; Phil. 3:14.
  - 4. The greatest need for us today is to see that Christ is the Spirit indwelling our spirit; if we do not see this point, everything of Christ will be merely an objective doctrine to us—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17—4:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; John 4:24.
  - 5. Christ is also the Word; when we contact the Lord's Word with our spirit, His words become spirit, and when His words become spirit, the Spirit enters into us so that we can be completely occupied by Him, transformed by Him, and mingled with Him to satisfy the desire of God's heart—Eph. 6:17-18; John 5:39-40; 6:63.
- E. When we have seen the all-inclusive Christ and have learned the secret of enjoying Him, we will be faithful to the Lord's recovery—Mark 9:7-8; Acts 26:19, 22; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9-10; 2:9-10; 2 Cor. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:9-18; Phil. 1:19-21a:

1. We should concentrate on Him, not on any persons, things, or matters other than Him; we should focus on Him as our unique center appointed by God so that all the problems among the believers may be solved—1 Cor. 1:9; Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:17b, 18b.
2. For a person to leave the Lord's recovery means that he has never seen what the recovery is; whether or not we are secure in the recovery and protected from divisiveness depends on the vision we have seen; it is only by focusing on Christ that we can be saved from division.
3. If we care only for Christ as our unique center, choice, preference, taste, and enjoyment, this will preserve us in the church in the Lord's recovery until He comes back; otherwise, we will be disappointed or distracted and forsake the Lord's recovery.

## **II. We must follow the pattern of Paul in Philippians to take Christ as everything:**

- A. "For to me, to live is Christ"—Paul took Christ as his living—1:21a.
- B. "As always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death"—Paul took Christ as his expression—v. 20.
- C. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"—Paul took the mind of Christ as his mind—2:5.
- D. "And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith"—Paul took Christ as his lived-out righteousness—3:9.
- E. "On account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ"—Paul considered the knowledge of Christ to be supereminent—v. 8.
- F. "One thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward"—Paul took Christ as his goal—vv. 13-14.
- G. "Brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things"—Paul took Christ as his virtues—4:8.
- H. "I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me"—Paul took Christ as his power to live out Christ as his magnificent living—v. 13.
- I. "I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack"—Paul took Christ as his secret—vv. 11-12; cf. vv. 4-7.
- J. "Our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself"—Paul took Christ as his expectation—3:20-21.

## **III. We gain Christ that He might gain us (v. 12; cf. Hab. 1:1) according to the following aspects:**

- A. Gaining Christ causes us to have a sense of God's presence (the pneumatic Christ)—John 20:22; Exo. 33:11a, 14:
  1. We should be afraid of only one thing—that we would lose the presence of our Lord—2 Cor. 2:10; cf. Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19.
  2. "He will enliven us after two days; / On the third day He will raise us up, / And we will live in His presence" (Hosea 6:2)—the reality of the third day is the person, the presence, of the resurrected Christ with the reality of revival (Hab. 3:2).
- B. Gaining Christ causes us to feel bright and clear inwardly—Rev. 22:1; John 1:4; 8:12; Ezek. 1:22, 26.

- C. Gaining Christ causes us to feel inwardly supplied with Christ as our spiritual food and spiritual drink—1 Cor. 10:3-4; John 6:57; 4:10, 14, 24; 1 Cor. 12:3b, 13.
- D. Gaining Christ causes us to grow in life and be transformed into His image—Col. 2:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2.
- E. Gaining Christ causes us to have vitality and to take action—Dan. 11:32b; Acts 1:8; 5:20; 13:1-4; 1 Cor. 14:31; cf. Ezek. 3:1-3; Psa. 68:11-13, 19.

**IV. In order to take Christ as everything and gain Him in all things, we must learn to continually deny our self and turn to our spirit:**

- A. We must enter into our spirit completely because the Lord as the Spirit, the reality of the Body, is in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.
- B. We must learn how to set our mind on the spirit; in other words, we must learn how to trust in God and depend on the Lord; the real secret of living the Christian life for the church life is for us to set our mind on the spirit—Rom. 8:6.
- C. Turning to the spirit is the secret of being a Christian; the way to follow the Lord, enjoy the Lord's riches, live in the reality of the Body of Christ, and function in the New Testament ministry is to continually exercise to reject our self, lose our soul-life, and turn to our spirit—2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 16—4:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 8:16.
- D. The work of the Lord, which we carry out by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a work that begins with the spirit and ends with the spirit; this work begins from our spirit and ends in others' spirits—1 Cor. 2:4-5, 13, 15; 2 Cor. 3:6; 13:3; cf. Psa. 42:7a.
- E. We have a spirit to contact and receive God and a soul to live out and express God; taking in God, living out God, and expressing God should be our joy, amusement, and entertainment—John 4:10, 14, 24; 6:57; Luke 1:46-47; 1 Cor. 10:31.
- F. The soul was created by God for the purpose of expressing Him, not to have its own enjoyment or preferences; in God's economy there is no selfish enjoyment; Paul's ministry was to dispense the riches of Christ as grace to the believers for their enjoyment—Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Eph. 3:2.
- G. To deny our self means to reject the soul's desire, preference, and choice; man's first sin was to do something for himself, to satisfy the self—Gen. 3:1-7.
- H. Anything that comes out of our self (the mind, emotion, and will of our fallen soul) is connected to Satan and to demons—Matt. 16:21-27:
  1. As the unchaste wife of Jehovah, Israel became evil; we need to realize that once we forsake God, we too can do any kind of evil—Hosea 4:1; Eph. 4:17-21.
  2. We must realize that if we do not remain in fellowship with God in our spirit, we lose God's presence and are capable of being in the flesh and of behaving like the worldly people—Phil. 2:1-2; 1 John 1:3; Eph. 4:17-19; Gen. 20; cf. 12:11-13; 13:18.
  3. We cannot afford to take a vacation from our fellowship with God in our spirit; our protection is not our self; it is God's presence—1 John 1:3; cf. Psa. 31:20.
- I. Prayer is the real denial of the self:
  1. Actually, we do not need to pray in a lengthy way; it is sufficient simply to call "O Lord Jesus"; even such a short prayer means "no longer I but Christ"—Rom. 10:12-13; Gal. 2:20.
  2. Our prayer testifies that we do not exercise our self-effort to deal with the situation (to "cast out demons"); instead, we apply Christ—Mark 9:14-29.
  3. To pray is to practice the vision concerning Christ with His death and resurrection being our replacement so that we may be fully "Christified" to satisfy the desire of God's heart—vv. 2-13.

## Message Two

### **Learning the Secret of Doing All Things in Christ as the Empowering One for Us to Live Christ, Magnify Christ, and Gain Christ for His Glory in the Church**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:19-21a; 2:2; 3:14; 4:6-8, 11-13

#### **I. Paul learned the secret of doing all things in Christ as the empowering One—Phil. 4:11b-13:**

- A. The phrase *learned the secret* indicates that Paul had come into a new situation, a new environment; whenever we are put in a new environment, we need to learn the secret of living in that environment.
- B. *I have learned the secret* literally means “I have been initiated”; the metaphor here refers to a person’s being initiated into a secret society with instruction in its rudimentary principles.
- C. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was initiated into Christ and into the Body of Christ; he then learned the secret of how to take Christ as life (Col. 3:4), how to live Christ (Phil. 1:21a), how to magnify Christ (v. 20), how to gain Christ (3:8, 12), and how to have the church life (1:8, 19; 2:1-4, 19-20; 4:1-3).

#### **II. The believers are disciples, learners, who are learning the secret, which is to learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus by allowing the Spirit of reality to guide them into all the reality of the actual condition of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels, a life in which Jesus did everything in God, with God, and for God; God was in His living, and He was one with God—John 16:13; Eph. 4:20-21:**

- A. The followers of Christ were disciplined through Christ’s human living on the earth as the model of a God-man—living God by denying Himself in His humanity (John 5:19, 30), revolutionizing their concept concerning man (Phil. 3:10; 1:21a).
- B. Because Christ lived God by denying Himself in His humanity, He “learned obedience from the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8), “becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross” (Phil. 2:8).
- C. We learn Christ (Matt. 11:29) according to His example, not by our natural life but by His life in resurrection, which is a life of obedience; a disciple is one who lives the divine life in his human life.
- D. “I was in the recovery observing how Brother Watchman Nee acted for eighteen years. All that I observed in him became things disciplining me” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 5, “The Vital Groups,” p. 76).
- E. As the Lord’s disciples, His learners, we are continually under His training as the grace of God, who also appeared to us as “the kindness and the love to man of our Savior God”; this grace is “training us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in the present age, awaiting the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”—Titus 3:4; 2:11-13.
- F. Because the sisters in the church life are the Lord’s disciples, the older sisters should be one with the Lord to train the young sisters “to love their husbands, to love their children, to be of a sober mind, pure, workers at home, good, subject to their own husbands, that the word of God would not be blasphemed”—2:3-5.
- G. As the Lord’s disciples, we need to obey the Lord’s word to “go and learn what this means”; God desires to show mercy to pitiful sinners, so He wants us to show mercy in love to others—Matt. 9:12-13; Micah 6:6-8; Mark 12:33.

**III. The secret in Philippians 4 is to do all things in Christ as the One who empowers us—v. 13; Hymns, #564:**

- A. Paul was a man in Christ (2 Cor. 12:2a), and he desired to be found in Christ by others; in Philippians 4:13 he declared that he was able to do all things in Him, the very Christ who empowered him; this is an all-inclusive and concluding word concerning his experience of Christ; it is the converse of the Lord's word in John 15:5 concerning our organic relationship with Him: "Apart from Me you can do nothing."
- B. Paul had been altogether in the Jewish religion under the law and had always been found by others in the law, but at his conversion he was transferred from the law and his former religion into Christ and became "a man in Christ"—2 Cor. 12:2a.
- C. Now he expected to be found in Christ by all who observed him; this indicates that he aspired to have his whole being immersed in and saturated with Christ so that all who observed him might find him fully in Christ; only when we are found in Christ will Christ be expressed and magnified—Phil. 3:9a; 1:20.
- D. On the one hand, by the empowering of Christ we can live a contented life (4:11-12); on the other hand, by the empowering of Christ we can be true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and well spoken of (v. 8).
- E. Paul's word about Christ as the empowering One specifically applies to Christ's empowering us to live Him as our human virtues and thereby to magnify Him in His unlimited greatness; to live a life of these virtues is much more difficult than doing a Christian work.

**IV. The practical way to do all things in Christ as the empowering One is seen in Philippians 4:6-7: "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus":**

- A. Christ Himself is the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding—Isa. 9:6; John 14:27; Luke 7:50; Rom. 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 15:13; 16:20.
- B. *To God* denotes motion toward, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship; hence, the sense of *to God* here is "in the fellowship with God"—Phil. 4:6.
- C. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God; the peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9) infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer, as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).
- D. The God of peace patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil (cf. Isa. 30:15a); if we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been assigned to us by God in order to serve us in fulfilling our destiny to gain Christ, live Christ, and magnify Christ (Rom. 8:28-30; Matt. 10:29-31; 2 Cor. 4:15-18).

**V. To learn the secret of doing all things in Christ as the empowering One is to "pray to fellowship with Jesus," who is our King, our Lord, our Head, and our Husband (Hymns, #784); prayer that contacts God consists of words spoken genuinely from the heart:**

- A. We may be in a situation of sorrow, depression, and disappointment; we should bring our problems to the Lord and tell Him about them; He is the best listener; He knows our emotion, and He sympathizes with our heart; He can comfort us and help us.

- B. We should realize that when we have a thorough talk with the Lord and pour out our heart to Him, our intimacy with the Lord is one step further, and we know Him a little more; intimate contact with Him at these times is hundreds of times better than our ordinary fellowship with Him; it is by these contacts that we grow in life—Psa. 62:6-8; 56:8; cf. 1 Sam. 1:15.
- C. If a person has never shed tears before the Lord, never shared his joy or sorrow with the Lord, and never talked with the Lord about his private matters, he has never had any intimate fellowship with the Lord, and he has never had any deep acquaintance with the Lord; one can only be drawn closer to the Lord through telling Him everything.
- D. He is sympathetic to every one of our problems; our Lord is willing to bear all our anxieties, and He is happy to listen to our speaking; in order to enjoy Him as the living water of life, we need to speak to Him as our spiritual rock—Num. 20:8; 1 Cor. 10:4; Exo. 17:6; *Hymns*, #248.
- E. The title of Psalm 102 says, “A Prayer of an afflicted one, when he is fainting and pours out his complaint before Jehovah”; we may complain to God, but our complaining may be the best prayer, the most pleasant prayer to God; while we are complaining, God is rejoicing because He is causing all things to work together for good that we may be conformed to the image of His Son—Rom. 8:28-29.
- F. Psalm 73 is a record of the sincere prayer of the seeking psalmist who was nearly stumbled by his own suffering and by the prosperity of the wicked; he considered that he had purified his heart in vain because, instead of enjoying material prosperity, he was plagued all day long and chastened every morning—vv. 12-16:
1. The solution to the psalmist’s perplexity concerning the prosperity of the wicked was obtained in God’s sanctuary (v. 17); first, God’s sanctuary, His habitation, is in our spirit (Eph. 2:22) and, second, it is the church (1 Tim. 3:15); to go into the sanctuary of God is to turn to our spirit and go to the meetings of the church and the meetings of the ministry; in our spirit and in the church we receive divine revelation and obtain the explanation to all our problems.
  2. Through his honest conversation with the Lord and his entering into God’s sanctuary, the Lord’s seeker was eventually enlightened by the Lord to the extent that he was able to say to Him, “Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth. / My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever”—Psa. 73:25-26.
  3. God’s intention with His seekers is that they may find everything in Christ and not be distracted from the absolute enjoyment of Christ; God’s ultimate desire in His economy is for us to live Christ, magnify Christ, and gain Christ for His glory in the church—Phil. 1:19-21a; 3:7-8; Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 10:31; 6:20; 1 Pet. 4:11; Eph. 3:16-21.

## Message Three

### **Being One in Soul to Enjoy Christ**

**by Thinking the One Thing, by Being One with Christ in His Inward Parts,  
and by Allowing God to Operate in Us the Willing and the Working for His Good Pleasure**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:4, 8, 18, 25, 27; 2:2, 12-13, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10, 15-16

**I. Strictly speaking, Philippians is a book not only on the experience of Christ but also on the enjoyment of Christ; the experience of Christ is primarily in our spirit, but the enjoyment of Christ is in our soul (our mind, emotion, and will):**

- A. Since Philippians is concerned with the experience and enjoyment of Christ, which issue in joy, it is a book filled with joy and rejoicing—1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4.
- B. The saints in Philippi had fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel, through the apostle Paul's ministry; this participation included their financial contributions to the apostle—vv. 10, 15-16:
  - 1. The Christ-experiencing and Christ-enjoying life is a life in the furtherance of the gospel, a gospel-preaching life, not individualistic but corporate; the more fellowship we have in the furtherance of the gospel, the more Christ we experience and enjoy; this kills our self, ambition, preference, and choice.
  - 2. Whether we speak or remain silent, our life, our living, our being, and our entire person must be a preaching of Christ—1:20; 4:22; cf. 2 Cor. 3:3.
- C. Paul charges us to conduct ourselves “in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ,” which is to “stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together along with the faith of the gospel”—Phil. 1:27:
  - 1. To be with one soul and to be like-souled for the gospel work are more difficult than to be in one spirit for the experience of Christ; Timothy was a brother who was like-souled with the apostle Paul—2:19-21, cf. v. 30.
  - 2. To be with one soul requires that, after having been regenerated in our spirit, we go further to be transformed in our soul—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2.
  - 3. If we are not one in our affections, thoughts, and decisions, we are not with one soul; as long as we are not one in soul, we are not in the fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel, and our conduct is not worthy of the gospel.
  - 4. When all the members in the church are in one spirit with one soul, this oneness will be convincing, subduing, and attractive, and we will experience Christ and enjoy Him.
- D. It is possible for us to have the experience of Christ without the enjoyment of Christ; the problem here is with our soul—our mind, emotion, and will; like children who are made to eat without enjoying their food, many times we experience Christ without enjoying Him.
- E. “I am somewhat concerned that you may not have very much enjoyment of Christ” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1978*, vol. 1, “The Experience of Christ,” p. 340); the reason that many lose the enjoyment of Christ is the problem they have in the soul; if you do not have much enjoyment of Christ, it indicates that you are not one in soul, joined in soul—Phil. 2:2.

**II. In order for us to be one in soul, we need to think the one thing: the *one thing* in Philippians refers to the subjective knowledge, experience, and enjoyment of Christ; the *one thing* is the pursuing of Christ to gain Him, lay hold of Him, and possess Him—1:20-21; 2:2, 5; 3:7-14; 4:13:**



- A. In order to live in the reality of the Body of Christ, we must enjoy Christ by loving Him to the uttermost, and in order to love Him, our thoughts need to be rescued from being hardened (2 Cor. 3:14), blinded (4:4), rebellious (10:4-5), and corrupted (11:2-3).
- B. Our thinking should be focused on the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and the experience and enjoyment of Christ; focusing on anything else causes us to think differently, thus creating dissensions among us—1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:8-9, 15; 4:2.
- C. The one thing, the unique thing, in the Lord's recovery is God's eternal economy with Christ as the centrality and universality—Col. 3:10-11:
  - 1. The one thing that should be focused on, stressed, and ministered in the Lord's recovery is the eternal economy of God—1 Tim. 1:3-4.
  - 2. The content of God's eternal economy is Christ; actually, Christ Himself in His full ministry of three stages is the divine economy (John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6); God's desire is to have a recovery purely and wholly of the person of Christ (Col. 1:17b, 18b; 2 Cor. 12:2a; 2:10; 3:3).
- D. Among the Philippians there was dissension in their thinking (Phil. 4:2), which troubled the apostle; hence, he asked them to think the same thing, even the one thing, that they might make his joy full (2:2):
  - 1. To think something other than the one thing is to rebel against God's economy; God's economy is that we think the one thing; in the church life we need to help all the saints to think the one thing; our thoughts should be focused on and filled with the enjoyment of Christ for the church life, the Body life.
  - 2. Because of the dissension in their thinking, the Philippian believers had different levels of love (v. 2); they did not have the same love toward all the saints for the keeping of oneness; if our love toward the saints has been regulated and dealt with, then we will enjoy Christ as we love the saints.
  - 3. Being one in soul, joined in soul, is not only for the experience of Christ but even more for the enjoyment of Christ; in order to enjoy Christ, we need to have a proper soul, a "co-soul" that is one with the souls of other saints.

**III. In order for us to be one in soul, we need to be one with Christ in His emotions, His "inward parts," signifying His inward affection, tender mercy, and sympathy—Phil. 1:8:**

- A. As a man, Christ's experiences in His inward parts included His love, desire, delight, and feeling—Psa. 16:3, 7 (see footnotes in the Recovery Version).
- B. Paul did not live a life in his natural inner being; he lived a life in the inward parts of Christ; if we would be those who are experientially in Christ, we must be in His inward parts, in His tender and delicate feelings—Col. 3:12.
- C. In the book of Philemon we have a picture of the Body life lived in the inward parts of Christ Jesus—vv. 7, 10-12, 20:
  - 1. While Onesimus was in prison at Rome with Paul, he was saved through Paul, who referred to him as "my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds"—v. 10.
  - 2. When Paul sent Onesimus back with his Epistle to Philemon, Paul said, "Him [Onesimus] I have sent back to you—him, that is, my very heart"—v. 12.
  - 3. Paul's inward affection and compassions went with Onesimus to Philemon; the words *very heart* are literally the same as *inward parts* in Philippians 1:8, which signify inward affection, tenderheartedness, and compassions—Col. 3:12.
- D. Paul lived in the reality of the Body of Christ by taking Christ's feeling as his own feeling; Christ's feeling for the Body became his feeling for the Body; this is most necessary for our living the Body life—2 Cor. 12:15.

- E. If we deny ourselves and identify ourselves with the Body, there will be no separation or disconnection from the Body; the life we live will fully be the Body life, and the Lord will gain the expression of His Body on earth today—Matt. 16:24; Eph. 4:16.
- F. The more we live in the inward parts of Christ Jesus, the greater will be our consciousness of the Body of Christ and the stronger will be our feeling for the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:26-27; Rom. 12:15.

**IV. In order for us to be one in soul, we need to work out our own salvation by cooperating with the inner energizing God, who operates in us both the “willing and the working for His good pleasure”—Phil. 2:12-13:**

- A. We work out our own salvation because God works within us; we may say that we do not have the willingness, but God is working the willingness into us for the working out of His good pleasure; the willing is within, and the working is without.
- B. We need to exercise our spirit with our subdued and resurrected will to choose to work out our own salvation by cooperating with the indwelling Triune God, who operates within us the willing for His good pleasure.
- C. Our transformed will can be seen typologically in Song of Songs 4:4; this verse says that the Lord’s loving seeker has a “neck like the tower of David, / Built for an armory: / A thousand bucklers hang on it, / All the shields of the mighty men”:
  1. The Bible speaks of those who walk according to their self-will, who are stubborn and proud, as stiff-necked ones (Isa. 3:16); hence, the neck denotes man’s will; the Lord considers the submission of man’s will as the most beautiful thing in man.
  2. The neck being like a tower signifies that the seeker’s will has been strengthened by God to the point that she no longer loves the world and is no longer affected by Satan; her will has been brought into complete submission to David (who signifies Christ), and her will has been taken captive by Christ.
  3. The armory stored within the tower signifies the victory of Christ for the preservation of the believer’s will from the enemy’s usurpation; bucklers and shields are for protection; and the mighty men denote strength.
  4. In summary, Song of Songs 4:4 indicates that the believer is willing to submit to Christ’s will, and her will is as strong as a tower for carrying out His will; she is on guard vigilantly and does not allow the enemy to usurp her submissive will.
- D. Our experience of Christ as our life of obedience in order to work out our own salvation is seen in type with the ark that Noah built; to build the ark is to build up the practical and present Christ as God’s salvation in our experience for the building up of the Body of Christ as the corporate Christ for God’s good pleasure—Phil. 2:8, 12-13:
  1. What Noah worked on and entered into was God’s salvation, the ark; we should have a practical and present Christ into whom we can enter as God’s salvation.
  2. The ark is a type of Christ, not only the individual Christ but also the corporate Christ, the church, which is the Body of Christ and the new man—Gen. 6:14; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 3:10-11.
  3. By building the ark and entering into it, Noah was not only saved from God’s judgment on the evil generation through the flood but was also separated from that generation and ushered into a new age—Gen. 8:13-19; 1 Pet. 3:20.
  4. Likewise, by building the church and entering into the church life through building up the practical and present Christ as God’s salvation in our experience, we will be saved from God’s judgment on today’s evil generation through the great tribulation (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27; 1 Thes. 5:3); separated from that generation (Luke 21:36; Rev. 3:10); and ushered into a new age, the age of the millennium.

## Message Four

### Knowing Christ and the Power of His Resurrection

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:10, 12-14; John 11:25; Acts 2:24; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; Rev. 1:17b-18; 2:8

#### I. Paul aspired to know Christ—Phil. 3:10:

- A. In the book of Philippians, the central matter is the subjective knowledge and experience of Christ—2:2, 5; 3:7-10; 4:10, 13.
- B. To have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ in Philippians 3:8 is by revelation, but to know Him in verse 10 is by experience.
- C. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is the excellency of Christ realized by us—v. 8.
- D. Paul first received the revelation of Christ, then sought the experience of Christ—to know and enjoy Christ in an experiential way.
- E. The word *know* in Philippians 3:10 is equal to *experience*:
  - 1. To know Christ means to experience Him, to enjoy Him, to participate in Him, and to partake of Him—vv. 9-10.
  - 2. To know Christ is thus to apprehend Him by experiencing Him—v. 8.
- F. To know Christ is not merely to have the knowledge concerning Him but to gain His very person—v. 8; 2 Cor. 2:10; cf. Col. 2:9, 16-17:
  - 1. To gain something requires the paying of a price—Phil. 3:7-8.
  - 2. To gain Christ is to experience, enjoy, and take possession of His unsearchable riches by paying a price—Eph. 3:8; cf. Rev. 3:18.
  - 3. The Christian life is a life of gaining Christ in His all-inclusiveness—Eph. 3:8:
    - a. Even though Paul had experienced and gained Christ tremendously, he did not consider that he had experienced Him in full or gained Him to the uttermost—Phil. 3:12.
    - b. Paul was still advancing toward the goal—the gaining of Christ to the fullest extent—vv. 12-14.
  - 4. In order to gain Christ to the fullest extent, Paul not only forsook his experience in Judaism but also would not linger in his past experiences of Christ—vv. 7-8, 13:
    - a. Not to forget but to linger in our past experiences, however genuine they were, frustrates our further pursuing of Christ—v. 13; Heb. 6:1a.
    - b. Because Christ is unsearchably rich, and there is a vast territory of His riches to be possessed, Paul was stretching out to reach the farthest extent of this territory—Eph. 3:8; Phil. 3:13.
- G. To know Christ is a result of being found in Him—vv. 9-10:
  - 1. The righteousness “which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,” caused Paul to know Christ—v. 9.
  - 2. The righteousness that we work out by our own effort does not cause us to know Christ; the more we do by our own effort, the less we know Christ—v. 9a.

#### II. Paul aspired to know and experience the power of Christ’s resurrection—v. 10:

- A. The power of Christ’s resurrection is His resurrection life, which raised Him from the dead—Eph. 1:19-20.
- B. Christ Himself is resurrection—John 11:25:
  - 1. “I am the First and the Last and the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades”—Rev. 1:17b-18:

- a. Because of the fall, death came in and is now working to gather everyone into Hades.
  - b. The keys of death and of Hades are in the hand of our Savior, who died and was resurrected—v. 18.
2. “These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again”—2:8:
    - a. *Lived again* refers to resurrection.
    - b. The Lord suffered death and lived again; He entered into death, but death could not hold Him because He is the resurrection—Acts 2:24; John 11:25.
    - c. Christ went into Hades, passed through death, overcame death, and came out of death triumphantly; this is resurrection—cf. 1 Pet. 3:18-22.
  3. Resurrection means that a man—our Lord Jesus—has broken through the barriers, even the greatest barrier of all—death—Acts 2:24; Eph. 1:19-20:
    - a. The Lord’s resurrection broke all the barriers of the natural realm; thus, Jesus is no longer bound by anything, including space and time—cf. John 7:6-8.
    - b. Our biggest limitations are space and time, but these two things cannot limit the resurrected Christ.
    - c. Death is the greatest limitation, but resurrection has conquered death; therefore, resurrection is the greatest power of all—Phil. 3:10; Eph. 1:19-20.
- C. Resurrection is life that overcomes death without being damaged or injured by death—John 11:25; Rev. 1:17b-18; 2:8:
1. Death is powerless to do anything with resurrection life—Acts 2:24.
  2. Death can inflict all kinds of damage on other forms of life; only one kind of life cannot be hurt by death, and this is resurrection life—John 11:25; Phil. 3:10:
    - a. Resurrection is life that passes through death and cannot be held by it.
    - b. According to the full revelation of the Scriptures, God Himself is the resurrection life—Rom. 4:17.
- D. The Spirit is the reality of Christ’s resurrection and its power—8:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 1 John 5:6:
1. In order to experience the resurrection life of Christ, we need to see that in resurrection Christ became the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b.
  2. The highest definition of resurrection is that it is the process by which Christ, the last Adam, became the life-giving Spirit.
  3. Christ’s resurrection was His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit in order to enter into His believers—v. 45b; John 20:22.
- E. The principle of resurrection is that the natural life is killed and that the divine life rises up in its place—2 Cor. 1:8-9:
1. That which passes through death and still remains is resurrection—Rev. 2:8.
  2. Resurrection is something that has come out of death and that is beyond the natural realm—Acts 2:24.
  3. Resurrection means that no event or circumstance can cause us, who have the resurrection life of Christ, to be held down—2 Cor. 1:8-9.
  4. To be in resurrection means that our natural life is crucified and that the God-created part of our being is uplifted in resurrection to be one with Christ in resurrection—Rom. 6:4-6.
  5. When we do not live by our natural life but live by the divine life within us, we are in resurrection—John 6:57; Rom. 8:11.

## Message Five

### **Knowing the Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings and Being Conformed to His Death**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:7-10; John 11:25; Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 1:24

#### **I. Paul aspired to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings—Phil. 3:10:**

- A. With Christ, the sufferings and death came first, followed by the resurrection; with us, the power of His resurrection comes first, followed by the participation in His sufferings and conformity to His death—v. 10.
- B. We first receive the power of His resurrection; then by this power we are enabled to participate in His sufferings and live a crucified life in conformity to His death.
- C. Christ's sufferings are of two categories: those for accomplishing redemption, which were completed by Christ Himself, and those for producing and building the church, which need to be filled up by the apostles and the believers—Col. 1:24:
  1. We cannot participate in Christ's sufferings for redemption, but we must take part in the sufferings of Christ for the producing and building up of the Body—cf. Rev. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; 2 Cor. 1:5-6; 4:12; 6:8-11.
  2. Christ as the Lamb of God suffered for redemption (John 1:29); Christ as the grain of wheat suffered for reproducing and building (12:24):
    - a. The Lord, as a grain of wheat that fell into the ground, lost His soul-life through death so that He might release His eternal life in resurrection to the many grains—10:11, 15, 17-18.
    - b. The one grain did not complete all the sufferings that are needed for the building up of the Body; as the many grains, we must suffer in the same way the one grain suffered—12:24-26:
      - (1) As the many grains, we also must lose our soul-life through death that we may enjoy eternal life in resurrection—v. 25.
      - (2) This is to follow Him that we may serve Him and walk with Him on this way, the way of losing our soul-life and living in His resurrection—v. 26.
      - (3) The way for the church to come into being and to increase is not by human glory; it is by the death of the cross—vv. 20-24.
- D. There is a difference between the sufferings that are for our transformation and the sufferings that are for the Body—2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24:
  1. Paul's word in Philippians 3:10 does not refer to sufferings for transformation.
  2. If we compare 3:10 with Colossians 1:24, we will see that the sufferings about which Paul was speaking in Philippians 3:10 are those that make up the lack of Christ's afflictions for the Body.
  3. In Colossians 1:24 Paul regarded his own sufferings as the filling up of what is lacking of Christ's sufferings for His Body.
  4. The sufferings of Christ for His Body are still going on, and we need to share in them—Phil. 3:10; cf. Acts 9:4-5.

5. It is when we suffer for the Body that we experience the power of Christ's resurrection—Col. 1:24; Phil. 3:10.

**II. In Philippians 3:10 Paul spoke of “being conformed to His death”; this expression indicates that Paul desired to take Christ's death as the mold of his life:**

- A. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ, counting all things as loss, gaining Christ, being found in Him, knowing Him, knowing the power of His resurrection, and knowing the fellowship of His sufferings all issue in one thing—being conformed to Christ's death—vv. 7-10.
- B. Being conformed to Christ's death indicates that His death is a mold—v. 10:
  1. The center of Philippians 3 is the matter of being conformed to the mold of Christ's death—vv. 7, 9, 12-16.
  2. We have been placed into this mold of death, and now we need to be conformed to this mold—Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3-5.
  3. The power of the resurrection life of Christ in us leads us, carries us, bears us, and places us into the mold of Christ's death—John 11:25; Eph. 1:19-20.
- C. The mold of Christ's death refers to Christ's experience of continually putting to death His human life that He might live by the life of God—John 6:57a:
  1. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He lived a crucified life; by living a crucified life He was alive to God and lived Him—Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 5:24.
  2. He always put His human life to death so that the divine life within Him could flow out—John 10:10b-11, 17.
  3. As He was living, He was also dying—dying to the old creation in order to live a life in the new creation; this is the meaning of “His death” in Philippians 3:10.
- D. To be conformed to Christ's death is to take Christ's death as the mold of our life—v. 10:
  1. Christ's death is a mold to which we are conformed in much the same way that dough is put into a cake mold and conformed to it.
  2. God has put us into the mold of Christ's death, and day by day God is molding us to conform us to this death—Rom. 6:3-4.
  3. Our life should be conformed to such a mold—dying to our human life in order to live the divine life—Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:10-11.
  4. If we put to death our natural life, we will have the consciousness that we have another life, the divine life, within us; this life will be released, and then in our experience we will be conformed to Christ's death—John 10:10b; 1 John 5:11-12.
  5. In the mold of Christ's death the natural man is killed, the old man is crucified, and the self is nullified—2 Cor. 4:16; Rom. 6:6; Matt. 16:24.
  6. If we allow our circumstances to press us into this mold, our daily life will be molded into the form of Christ's death—Rom. 8:28-29.
- E. The only way to glorify God is to be conformed to Christ's death; the more we are conformed to Christ's death, the more we glorify the Father—John 12:28; 13:31.

## Message Six

### Attaining to the Out-resurrection

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:10-14; Rom. 6:3-5; 8:11; Rev. 1:17b-18

**I. “The out-resurrection” refers to the outstanding resurrection, the extra-resurrection, which will be a prize to the overcoming saints—Phil. 3:11; Rev. 20:4, 6:**

- A. All believers who are dead in Christ will participate in the resurrection from the dead at the Lord’s coming back—1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52.
- B. The Lord’s overcomers will enjoy an extra, outstanding portion of that resurrection, a resurrection in which they will receive the reward of the kingdom; this is what the apostle Paul sought after—Phil. 3:11; Heb. 11:35, 26.

**II. For Paul, to live was Christ as the out-resurrection—Phil. 1:21a; 3:11:**

- A. The Christ who lived in Paul is the One who, in His own person, is the reality of the out-resurrection—John 11:25; Rev. 1:17b-18; 2:8.
- B. The out-resurrection is actually the dear, precious, excellent person of Christ, the One who, through crucifixion and resurrection, has passed out of the old creation and has entered into God—John 14:3, 20; Heb. 6:19-20.
- C. In order to attain to the out-resurrection, we need to know Christ in the power of His resurrection, know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings, and know Him by being conformed to His death—Phil. 3:10-11.
- D. In verses 13 and 14 we see that Paul did not account of himself to have laid hold of the out-resurrection already; he pursued toward the goal of the out-resurrection for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus had called him upward.

**III. Our Christian life has a goal, and this goal is the out-resurrection, the extraordinary resurrection—v. 11:**

- A. Paul aspired to be conformed to Christ’s death so that, by any means, he might arrive at the out-resurrection from the dead—v. 10.
- B. The Christ whom we should live is Himself the out-resurrection—1:21a; 3:11; John 11:25.
- C. We all are on the way to the out-resurrection; the out-resurrection should be the goal and destination of our Christian life—Phil. 3:11-15.
- D. The way toward the out-resurrection is the process of resurrection—Rom. 8:11:
  - 1. This process began on the day that we were baptized and will conclude when we arrive at the outstanding resurrection—6:3-5.
  - 2. As we move toward the goal, we are in the process of being resurrected; eventually, every part of our being will be resurrected—1 Thes. 5:23.
  - 3. We will continue in this process until we arrive at the goal of the out-resurrection—Phil. 3:11.
- E. To attain to the out-resurrection is to arrive at the out-resurrection; this requires us to triumphantly run the race for the prize—1 Cor. 9:24-26; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 12:1-2.

**IV. The result of being conformed to Christ’s death is that we may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead—Phil. 3:10-11:**

- A. Death is the condition for our attaining to the out-resurrection—v. 11.
  - B. Arriving at the out-resurrection is the result, the issue, of being conformed to Christ's death—v. 10.
  - C. To be conformed, molded, to the death of Christ means that we remain always in His death—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10.
  - D. If we are being conformed to Christ's death, we will be in the resurrection life of Christ, and in resurrection we will meet Christ, experience Christ, and enjoy Christ—John 11:25; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:8, 19, 21a; 2:5-8; 3:12.
  - E. If we remain in Christ's death, allowing ourselves to be molded into its likeness, the outcome will be that every part of our being will be gradually resurrected—vv. 10-11.
- V. Concerning attaining to the out-resurrection, we need to ask an important question: Can we reach the goal of the out-resurrection in this age, or can we only run the race and hope to reach the goal in the coming age?**
- A. If we think that we must wait until the coming age to reach the goal of the out-resurrection but do not arrive at this goal in this age, we will not attain to it in the next age.
  - B. We should endeavor to arrive at the out-resurrection during our lifetime—v. 11.
  - C. Romans 8:11 reveals that we can attain to the out-resurrection in this age:
    1. This verse says that if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to that part of our being that is dying—our mortal body.
    2. *Gives life* in verse 11 does not refer to healing but to the result of our allowing the Spirit of God to make His home in us and saturate our entire being with the divine life.
    3. The Spirit is dwelling in us to work the out-resurrection into our being in a real and practical way.
- VI. To arrive at the out-resurrection indicates that our entire being is gradually and continually resurrected—1 Thes. 5:23:**
- A. God first resurrected our deadened spirit; He proceeds to resurrect our soul and our mortal body until our whole being—spirit, soul, and body—is fully resurrected out of our old being by His life and with His life—Eph. 2:5-6; Rom. 8:6, 11.
  - B. This is a process in life through which we must pass and a race that we must run until we arrive at the out-resurrection as the prize—Phil. 3:11-14.
  - C. If we are conformed to Christ's death, every part of our being will be gradually resurrected; thus, the Christian life is a process of resurrection.
  - D. We can reach this goal only by living a crucified life—v. 11; Gal. 2:20.
- VII. We need to be conformed to Christ's death so that by any means we may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead; this is the only way for the Lord to go on in His recovery, the only way to build up His church, the only way for the bride to make herself ready, and the only way to bring the Lord back—Phil. 3:10-11; Matt. 16:18; Rev. 19:7-9a; 22:14, 20.**