

## THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS

### Message 1

#### Living Christ to Magnify Him

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1

- I. **The subject of Philippians is the experience of Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a; 2:5-13; 3:7-14; 4:11-13:**
  - A. The most important thing for us to do is to experience Christ as our enjoyment today so that the church may be built up for His glory; this is the way for us to be preserved in the Lord's recovery until He comes back.
  - B. The experience of Christ is a Body matter; this experience must be in the Body and for the Body; only by experiencing Christ in the Body can we experience Him to the fullest extent—1:19; 2:1-2; 4:2-3, 10, 14-20; Eph. 4:16; Rom. 12:5.
  - C. The experience of Christ is our fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel until the Lord Jesus comes back—Phil. 1:3-6:
    1. The Philippians' fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel gave them the ground for their experience and enjoyment of Christ, which is the main point of this book.
    2. The Christ-experiencing and-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—cf. John 15:4-6, 11.
- II. **The normal experience of Christ is to live Him, and to live Him is to magnify Him always, regardless of the circumstances—Phil. 1:19-21a:**
  - A. In Philippians 1:19-21a we see that Paul magnified Christ by living Him:
    1. In the apostle's suffering in his body, Christ was magnified—shown or declared to be great (without limitation), exalted, and extolled; the apostle's sufferings afforded him opportunity to express Christ in His unlimited greatness—v. 19, and note 1.
    2. Christ could be magnified in Paul's body because Paul lived Christ—v. 21a:
      - a. Christ lived within Paul as his life, and Paul lived Christ without as His living; they lived together as one person with one life and one living—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21a.
      - b. The Christian life is not a life of ethics, religion, culture, or even morality; the Christian life is Christ—Col. 3:4.
      - c. The standard of the Christian life is Christ, and the normal experience of Christ is to live Christ—Eph. 4:20; Col. 2:2-3, 8; Phil. 1:21a.
  - B. In Philippians 1:19a Paul said, "For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation":
    1. Salvation in this verse means to be sustained and strengthened to live and magnify Christ; it is not eternal salvation, but a subjective, experiential, and constant salvation in our daily life for magnifying Christ.
    2. To live Christ for His magnification is to participate in Christ's salvation in life, in which we are saved from the failure of not living Christ and from the defeat of not magnifying Christ.
  - C. The key to Paul's experience of salvation was the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; when we enjoy the Spirit and partake of Him, Christ is magnified and becomes our expression—v. 19b; Heb. 1:9b; 3:14a; 6:4b; 1 Cor. 12:3b:

1. The Greek word translated *bountiful supply* refers to the supplying of all the needs of the chorus by the choragus, the leader of the chorus.
  2. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is not merely the Spirit of God before the Lord's incarnation but the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit with divinity, after the Lord's resurrection, compounded with many elements—Phil. 1:19; John 7:39; Exo. 30:23-25:
    - a. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is compounded with the Lord's incarnation (humanity)—Matt. 1:18; Acts 16:7, and note 1.
    - b. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is compounded with the Lord's human living under the cross—v. 7; cf. 2 Cor. 4:10-11.
    - c. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is compounded with the Lord's crucifixion—Heb. 9:14; Acts 16:7; Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:16, 24.
    - d. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is compounded with the Lord's resurrection—1 Cor. 15:45b, and note 1; Rom. 8:9, 11; cf. Phil. 3:10.
  3. Such a Spirit has, and even is, the bountiful supply for us; everything we need is in the Spirit with His bountiful supply.
- D. We need to see the way to live Christ:
1. We need to pray without ceasing by calling on the Lord's name; it is only by a continual living prayer, a breathing prayer, that we spontaneously live Christ—John 20:22; 1 Thes. 5:17; Lam. 3:55.
  2. The bountiful supply of the Spirit is embodied in the word; we need to open from the depths of our being and exercise our spirit to receive the Word of God into us by praying, singing, psalming, thanking, and calling on the Lord; we live Christ automatically when we are saturated with the word of Christ through the Spirit—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17-18; 5:18; Col. 3:16-17.
  3. The bountiful supply of the Spirit is upon the Body of Christ; Paul realized that he was simply a member of the Body, and that he needed the supply of the Body; to enjoy the Spirit we need to be part of God's dwelling place and His service—Phil. 1:19; Exo. 30:25-26; Psa. 133:1-2.

**III. If we magnify Christ by living Him, we will become strong factors, channels of supply, to enable the saints to grow in life and enjoy the Lord—Phil. 1:22-26:**

- A. Because of Paul the churches could have the growth in life and could be filled with the enjoyment of Christ; this should also be true of us today—v. 25.
- B. Because Paul lived and magnified Christ to the uttermost, he could transfuse Christ into the saints and minister Christ to all the churches.
- C. Paul's consideration to either depart and be with Christ or remain in the flesh was not selfish but was for the saints' sake; he was absolutely occupied by the Lord and the church—vv. 23-24:
  1. It should matter to the church whether we remain or go to be with the Lord, but this depends on our living Christ, magnifying Christ, ministering Christ, and transfusing Christ from the depths of our being into that of the saints—cf. 2:25-30.
  2. In the Body life there is the urgent need of certain ones to function as channels of supply—cf. Zech. 4:12-14; Judg. 9:9.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS

### Message 2

#### Taking Christ as the Pattern and Holding Him Forth

Scripture Reading: Phil. 2

- I. **There is an urgent need among us in the Lord's recovery today to experience Christ as our pattern—Phil. 2:3-8:**
  - A. If we would know Christ as the pattern, we should let the mind which was in Christ Jesus be in us; we need to take Christ's mind as our mind—vv. 3-5.
  - B. We need to know Christ as our pattern—vv. 5-9:
    1. In Philippians 2:5-9 Paul presents Christ as the pattern; we need to have this pattern infused into us.
    2. The pattern of the Christian life is the God-man Savior, who emptied Himself and humbled Himself and who has been exalted and glorified by God—vv. 6-9:
      - a. Although the Lord was equal with God, He did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped; rather, He emptied Himself, laying aside what He possessed—the form of God—vv. 6-7a.
      - b. The Lord became “in the likeness of men”—vv. 7b-8a.
      - c. Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient even unto death—the death of the cross—v. 8b.
      - d. The Son willingly emptied Himself to become a created man as the representation of submission to authority—vv. 6-8.
      - e. The Lord humbled Himself to the uttermost, but God exalted Him to the highest peak and bestowed on Him “the name which is above every name”—v. 9.
  - C. Christ as our pattern is not only objective but also subjective and experiential; the One who set up the pattern and who Himself is the pattern is now operating within us as the indwelling God—vv. 5, 12-13:
    1. The principle of Christ as the inward pattern for our living is that even if we have the highest standard or the highest position, we should not grasp it—vv. 3-6.
    2. We need to live Christ in His human living, especially in His emptying Himself and humbling Himself and in His not grasping equality with God as a treasure—1:20-21a; 2:6.
    3. We have Christ crucified as our pattern, and this pattern is the crucified life within us—1 Cor. 1:23a; 2:2; Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 6:14:
      - a. The steps of Christ's humiliation in Philippians 2:5-8 are aspects of the crucified life lived out in a full way; when we live Christ, we live the One who is the pattern of a crucified life—Phil. 1:21a; 1 Cor. 2:2:
        - (1) In this crucified life there is no room for rivalry, vainglory, self-exaltation, or ambition; rather, there is self-emptying and self-humbling—Phil. 2:3-8; Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45; Gal. 5:26.
        - (2) If we live a crucified life we will not offend others and we will forgive—Matt. 18:6-7, 21-35; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12-14.
        - (3) If we live a crucified life in resurrection, it will be impossible for us to cause any problems in the church, no situation will be able to touch or trouble us, and we will remain in the church to become suppliers of life—2 Cor. 4:10-12.

- b. The highest life on earth is a crucified life; whenever we live a crucified life, God will bring us into resurrection—Phil. 3:10-11.
- c. Christ is exalted in our daily life as we, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, take Him as the crucified life to be the pattern of our daily life—2:5; 1:19-21a.

**II. We need to experience Christ as our constant salvation and hold Him forth as the word of life—2:12-16:**

- A. The salvation in Philippians 2:12 is not eternal salvation from God’s condemnation and from the lake of fire but the daily and constant salvation that is Christ as a living person:
  - 1. When Christ as our pattern becomes our inward life, the pattern becomes our salvation; to work out our salvation is to work out this pattern and to become in experience a reprint of this pattern—cf. 1 Pet. 2:21.
  - 2. The constant salvation in Philippians 1:19 is one in which a believer is saved from a specific encounter in a particular situation, whereas the constant salvation in 2:12 is one in which any believer is saved from ordinary things in common situations in his daily living.
- B. Paul said that we need to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, “for it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure”—2:12-13:
  - 1. To work out our own salvation is to carry it out, to bring it to the ultimate conclusion—vv. 9, 12; cf. v. 8; 1 Sam. 15:22.
  - 2. The inner operating God Himself is our salvation, and obedience to Him is the working out of our salvation—Phil. 2:12-13.
  - 3. The reason we need to obey always is that God operates in us—v. 13:
    - a. It is not that we by ourselves carry out our salvation but that God operates in us to do it; the only thing we need to do is to obey the inner operating, energizing God—cf. Col. 1:29.
    - b. God operates in us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure—Phil. 2:13.
- C. Murmurings and reasonings frustrate us from carrying out our salvation to the fullest extent and from experiencing and enjoying Christ to the uttermost—v. 14:
  - 1. Murmurings are of our emotion and come mainly from the sisters; reasonings are of the mind and come mainly from the brothers.
  - 2. The brothers and sisters need to see that when they murmur and reason, they disobey the God who works within them; only by obedience can murmurings and reasonings be put to death—v. 12.
  - 3. Our family life and church life should be full of salvation and without any murmurings and reasonings.
- D. In the midst of the dark and corrupt world, which is usurped by Satan, our function is to shine as luminaries, holding forth the word of life—vv. 15-16:
  - 1. Christ is the sun, with the church as the moon and the believers as the planets to reflect Him by holding forth the word of life.
  - 2. To hold forth the word of life is to apply it, to present it, and to offer it to the world by living out Christ—Acts 5:20.
  - 3. To shine as luminaries (Phil. 2:15) is to magnify Christ (1:20), and to hold forth the word of life (2:16) is to live Christ (1:21a).
  - 4. The only way to live Christ is to be saturated with the word of life; if we are filled with the riches of the living Word, spontaneously we will hold forth the word of life—2 Tim. 3:16; John 6:63; Eph. 6:17-18; Col. 3:16.

# THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS

## Message 3

### Pursuing Christ to Gain Him

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3

- I. We need to count all things as refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ—Phil. 3:8:**
- A. We who believe in Christ should have no confidence in the flesh, no trust in our natural ability or heritage; our confidence should be wholly in the Lord—Phil. 3:3-6:
1. The flesh in Philippians 3:3 and 4 comprises all that we are and have in our natural being; confidence in the flesh refers to all the good items or qualities that we have in the flesh; the honorable, lovable, and superior aspects of our natural being are still the flesh.
  2. The greatest problems among God's children are that they do not know what the flesh is and that their flesh has not been dealt with—Rom. 8:8; Gal. 5:24.
  3. Confidence in the flesh keeps us from Christ—Phil. 3:2-4, 10.
  4. Only when we have been enlightened by God will we be able to say truly that we have no trust in our natural qualifications, ability, or intelligence; only then will we be able to testify that we have no confidence in the flesh and that our confidence is wholly in the Lord—Phil. 3:3; Prov. 3:5-6.
  5. If we would experience Christ, we must not trust in the flesh but trust only in the Lord; this is the secret to the experience of Christ—Phil. 3:3.
- B. If we would experience Christ, we first need to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ—Phil. 3:7-10.
1. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His person—Phil.3:8; Matt. 17:5; Col. 1:13.
  2. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is our subjective knowing of Christ (John 17:3), a revelation, a vision, concerning Christ and His excellency—Gal. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:17-23.
  3. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is the excellency of Christ realized by us—John 16:13-14; Gal. 1:15-16:
  4. We need to have a vision of the preciousness of Christ and the excellency of the knowledge of the all-inclusive, unlimited Christ—1 Pet. 2:4, 7; Col. 1:12, 15-19; 2:2-3, 9, 16-17; 3:4, 10.
  5. Without the revelation concerning Christ, we cannot know Christ—Matt. 16:17; 11:27; Gal. 1:15-16; John 17:3.
- C. On account of (or because of) the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul counted all things to be loss—Phil. 3:8a:
1. Paul's eyes were opened to see the excellency of the wonderful, all-inclusive Christ; on account of this excellency, he counted as loss all things, whether they related to religious gain or natural gain—including rank, position, fame, and wealth.
  2. The more we have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the more we will count as loss everything religious and natural—vv. 4-8a.
- D. On account of Christ, Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse in order to gain Christ—vv. 7, 8b.

**II. We need to know Christ, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings—Phil 3:10-11:**

- A. To know Christ is by experience—to have an experiential knowledge of Him—v. 10:
  - 1. To know Christ is not merely to have the knowledge of Him but to gain His person (2 Cor. 2:10); to gain Christ is to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His unsearchable riches by paying a price—Phil. 3:8; Eph. 3:8.
  - 2. We need to know Christ by experiencing Him, enjoying Him, being one with Him, and having Him live within us; in this way we know Him by both revelation and experience Phil. 3:10; 1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 2:20.
- B. We should aspire to know the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings—Phil. 3:10:
  - 1. The power of Christ's resurrection is His resurrection life, which raised Him from the dead—Eph. 1:19-20:
    - a. The Spirit compounded with Christ's resurrection and its power indwells our spirit to dispense Christ's resurrection and its power into our entire being—Phil. 1:19; Exo. 30:23-25; Rom. 8:6b, 10-11.
    - b. If we put ourselves aside and remain under the death of the cross, we will experience the power of Christ's resurrection, and spontaneously, the power of resurrection experienced by us will build up the Body—Phil. 3:10; Eph. 4:12, 16.
  - 2. The expression the fellowship of His sufferings in Philippians 3:10 refers to the participation in Christ's sufferings, a necessary condition for the experience of the power of His resurrection—Matt. 20:22-23; Col. 1:24:
    - a. We first experience the power of Christ's resurrection, and then by this power we are enabled to participate in His sufferings—Phil. 3:10.
    - b. These sufferings are mainly for Christ's Body, the church—Col. 1:24.

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

- A. Being conformed to Christ's death is the base of the experience of Christ—1:20-21a; 3:9-10.
- B. The mold of Christ's death refers to Christ's continually putting to death His natural life so that He might live by the life of God—John 6:57a.
- C. By being conformed to Christ's death, we experience Christ in His death for the release, impartation, and multiplication of life, and we also glorify the Father—12:24-26,28; 13:31; 2 Cor. 4:12.

**IV. The result of being conformed to Christ's death is that we attain to the out-resurrection from the dead, which will be a prize to the overcomers—Phil. 3:11, note 1.**

**V. We need to gain Christ by pursuing Him—vv. 12-16:**

- A. Like Paul, we should pursue Christ Himself and “pursue toward the goal for the prize”—vv. 12,14a:
- B. In order to pursue Christ, we should not think that we have attained, and we should forget the things which are behind and stretch “forward to the things which are before”—vv. 12-13.
- C. The goal toward which we are pursuing is the full enjoyment and gaining of Christ, and the prize is the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom as a reward to the victorious runners of the New Testament race—v. 14; 1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 10:35; 11:26; 12:1-2.

# THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS

## Message 4

### Having Christ as Our Secret of Sufficiency

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4

- I. We need to take Christ as our virtues, living a life full of forbearance but without anxiety—Phil. 4:5-6:**
- A. The virtues of Christ for our experience in Philippians 4:5-9 are the expression of a life that lives Christ—1:19-21a; 2:5-13; 3:8-10:
1. Paul considers forbearance and the lack of anxiety as the first two aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ.
  2. Anxiety, coming from Satan, is the sum total of human life and disturbs the believers' life of living Christ; forbearance, coming from God, is the sum total of a life that lives Christ; the two are opposites.
- B. Forbearance is reasonableness, considerateness, and consideration in dealing with others, without being strict in claiming one's legal rights; forbearance means that we are easily satisfied, even with less than our due:
1. According to Christian experience, forbearance is all-inclusive, for it includes all Christian virtues:
    - a. Forbearance includes love, patience, kindness, humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness, a willingness to yield; if we have such an all-inclusive virtue, we shall also have righteousness and holiness.
    - b. Forbearance also includes self-control, moderation, gentleness, understanding, sympathy, wisdom, mercy, peacefulness, looking to the Lord, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things.
  2. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable—cf. 2 Cor. 6:1a; 10:1; Phil. 1:19; Isa. 11:2:
    - a. If we are forbearing, we shall have the wisdom and the ability to supply others with what they need; we shall also have the full knowledge of what to say to them and when to say it—50:4-5; Col. 1:28.
    - b. To be forbearing is to consider how others will be affected by what we do or say—2 Chron. 1:10.
  3. As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself; since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance—Phil. 1:21a:
    - a. To let our forbearance be known to all men is to let the Christ whom we live and magnify, whom we take as our pattern and pursue as our goal, be known to all men.
    - b. To make known our forbearance is to live a life which expresses Christ as the totality of all human virtues.
- C. “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”—Phil. 4:6-7:
1. 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.

2. 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. 10:29-30; 2 Cor. 4:15-18.

## II. We need to take Christ as our secret and as our power—Phil 4:11-13:

- A. The subject of the book of Philippians is the experience of Christ in every kind of circumstance—1:19-21a; 2:5; 3:9-10; 4:11-13.
- B. In Philippians 4 Christ is the secret and the power for us to enjoy; Paul had learned the secret of sufficiency, of satisfaction, of contentment; this secret is actually Christ Himself—vv. 11-13:
  1. In any environment and in any matter, Paul, who experienced Christ richly and abundantly, learned the secret to be content and to rejoice always—v. 4.
  2. Paul had not only learned a secret; he had been initiated and had learned certain basic principles—v. 12.
  3. He 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; 2:14, 19-20; 4:1-3).
- C. In verse 13 we have a basic principle related to Paul's secret of sufficiency in Christ: "I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me":
  1. The secret in Philippians 4 is to do all things in Christ—John 15:4a, 5:
  2. Whatever we do should be done in Christ, not in ourselves; this is the secret Paul learned and the secret we need to learn today.
  3. The way to experience Christ is to do everything in Him.
  4. If we do all things in Christ, we shall experience Christ, enjoy Christ, and accumulate Christ; this is the way to become rich in Christ and to have many rich experiences of Christ—Eph. 3:8.
  5. The issue of practicing the secret of being in Christ is that for us to live is Christ; because we do all things in Christ, we live Christ—Phil. 1:21a.
  6. Paul's word in 4:13 is an all-inclusive and concluding word on his experience of Christ.
- D. We need to learn the secret of being in Christ as the empowering One:
  1. To learn the secret of being in Christ as the empowering One is to learn the secret of abiding in Christ; to abide in Christ is to dwell in Him, to remain in fellowship with Him, that we may experience and enjoy His abiding in us—John 15:4-5; 1 John 2:27.
  2. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by loving Him—John 14:21, 23.
  3. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by caring for the inward teaching of the all-inclusive anointing—1 John 2:27.
  4. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by "switching on" the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit by rejoicing always, praying unceasingly, and giving thanks in everything—Rom. 8:2,4; Phil. 4:13; 2:13; 1 Thes. 5:16-18; Col. 3:17.
  5. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by dealing with the constant word in the Scriptures, which is outside of us, and the present word as the Spirit, which is within us—John 5:39-40; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rev. 2:7.