

Message Four

Philippians—Experiencing Christ by Taking Him as Everything

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:19-21; 2:5; 3:8-9, 13-14, 20-21; 4:8, 11-13

I. We need to take Christ as our living—Phil. 1:21:

- A. Paul's life was to live Christ; he would not live the law but would live Christ, not be found in the law but be found in Christ (3:9).
- B. He lived Christ because Christ lived in him (Gal. 2:20); he and Christ had one life and one living; they lived together as one person.
- C. The normal experience of Christ is to live Him, and to live Him is to magnify Him always, regardless of the circumstances.

II. We need to take Christ as our expression—Phil. 1:19-20:

- A. In the apostle's suffering in his body, Christ was magnified, that is, shown or declared to be great (without limitation), exalted, and extolled.
- B. The apostle's sufferings afforded him opportunity to express Christ in His unlimited greatness.
- C. To magnify Christ under any circumstances is to experience Him with the topmost enjoyment.

III. We need to take the mind of Christ as our mind—2:5:

- A. *Let this mind be in you* may also be translated as "think this in you"; *this* refers to the considering in verse 3 and the regarding in verse 4.
- B. This kind of thinking, this kind of mind, was also in Christ when He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and humbled Himself, being found in fashion as a man—vv. 7-8.
- C. To have such a mind requires us to be one with Christ in His inward parts (1:8); to experience Christ, we need to be one with Him to this extent, that is, in His tender inward feeling and in His thinking—cf. Exo. 21:1-6.

IV. We need to take Christ as our lived-out righteousness—Phil. 3:9:

- A. At his conversion Paul was transferred from the law and his former religion into Christ and became "a man in Christ"—2 Cor. 12:2.
- B. In experiencing Christ, Paul was found by others to be a man in Christ, not having a righteousness that was from his own keeping of the law but having the righteousness from God through his faith in Christ, which is just Christ Himself lived out from him to be expressed as righteousness—Phil. 3:9.
- C. This gave Paul the ministry of righteousness, which is the living out and genuine expression of Christ—2 Cor. 3:9.

V. We need to consider the knowledge of Christ excellent—Phil. 3:8:

- A. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His person—cf. 1 Pet. 1:8; 2:7a.
- B. When Christ was revealed to Paul by God (Gal. 1:15-16), he saw that the excellency, the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, the surpassing worth, of Christ far exceeded the excellency of the law.
- C. Paul's knowledge of Christ issued in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; on account of this, he counted as loss not only the law and the religion founded according to the law, but all things.

VI. We need to take Christ as our goal—Phil. 3:13-14:

- A. Paul's goal was the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ.
- B. In order to gain Christ to the fullest extent, Paul not only forsook his experiences in Judaism but also would not linger in his past experiences of Christ; not to forget but to linger in our past experiences, however genuine they were, frustrates our further pursuing of Christ.
- C. Paul pursued toward the goal for the prize, which is the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom as a reward to the victorious runners of the New Testament race—1 Cor. 9:24-27.

VII. We need to take Christ as our virtues—Phil. 4:8:

- A. Rejoicing in the Lord (v. 4) is the secret of having the excellent virtues listed in verses 5 through 9.
- B. The God of peace is the source of all the virtues spoken of in verse 8; by our fellowship with Him and having Him with us, all these virtues will issue forth in our life.

VIII. We need to take Christ as our power—v. 13:

- A. Paul was a person in Christ (2 Cor. 12:2), and he desired to be found in Christ by others; now he declared that he was able to do all things in Him, the very Christ who empowered him.
- B. This is an all-inclusive and concluding word on Paul's 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."
- C. The Greek word for *empowers* means "makes dynamic inwardly"; Christ dwells in us (Col. 1:27), and He empowers us, making us dynamic from within, not from without; by such inward empowering, Paul was able to do all things in Christ.

IX. We need to take Christ as our secret—Phil. 4:11-12:

- A. *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.
- B. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was initiated into Christ and the Body of Christ.
- C. He then learned the secret of how to take Christ as life, how to live Christ, how to magnify Christ, how to gain Christ, and how to have the church life, all of which are rudimentary principles.

X. We need to take Christ as our expectation—3:20-21:

- A. The transfiguration of our body is the ultimate consummation of God's salvation; in His salvation God first regenerated our spirit (John 3:6), now is transforming our soul (Rom. 12:2), and consummately will transfigure our body when He returns to glorify His saints (8:30), making us the same as Christ in all three parts of our being.
- B. Because we are awaiting the Son of God from the heavens, our future is focused on Him—1 Thes. 1:10.
- C. Our life declares that we have no hope on this earth and no positive destiny in this age and that our hope is the coming Lord, who is our destiny forever.
- D. This governs, holds, and keeps our Christian life for the church life.