

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.