

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.