

PHILIPPIANS

Message Eight

Taking Christ as Our Goal

(2)

**Knowing Christ, the Power of His Resurrection,
and the Fellowship of His Sufferings**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:10

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

- A. 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.
- B. Paul first received the revelation of Christ, then sought the experience of Christ—to know and enjoy Christ in an experiential way.
- C. *The one thing* in the book of Philippians is the subjective knowledge and experience of Christ—2:2; cf. 1:20-21; 2:5; 3:7-9; 4:12-13.
- D. To know Christ is not merely to have the knowledge concerning Him but to gain His very person—2 Cor. 2:10; cf. Col. 2:9, 16-17:
 1. To gain something requires the paying of a price; to gain Christ is to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His unsearchable riches (Eph. 3:8) by paying a price.
 2. Christ has gained us, taken possession of us, that we might gain Him, take possession of Him—Phil. 3:12.
 3. The Christian life is a life of gaining Christ in His full ministry in His three divine and mystical stages—incarnation, inclusion, and intensification—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 1:4; 4:5; 5:6:
 - 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; for this reason he was still advancing toward the goal—the gaining of Christ to the fullest extent—Phil. 3:12-14.
 - b. In order to gain Christ to the fullest extent, Paul not only forsook his experiences in Judaism

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but also would not linger in his past experiences of Christ and be limited by them; he forgot the past—v. 13.

- c. 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.
- d. 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—Phil. 3:13.

II. Paul aspired to know 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. The Spirit is the reality of Christ's resurrection and its power—Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 1 John 5:6.
- C. The Spirit compounded with Christ's resurrection and its power (Phil. 1:19; Exo. 30:23-25) indwells our spirit (Rom. 8:10-11) to dispense Christ's resurrection and its power not only to our spirit and soul (vv. 6b, 10) but also to our mortal body (vv. 11, 13b; 2 Cor. 4:11).
- D. We should cooperate with the resurrecting Spirit to recognize that we have been resurrected with Christ (Col. 2:12; Eph. 2:6a) and to pursue the power of the resurrection of Christ:
 - 1. It is by this power of Christ's resurrection that we, the lovers of Christ, determine to take the cross by denying our self—Matt. 16:24; cf. S. S. 2:8-9.
 - 2. It is also by this power of resurrection that we, the lovers of Christ, are enabled to be conformed to His death, to be one with His cross—Phil. 3:10; cf. S. S. 2:14-15.
 - 3. In order to experience the life-giving Spirit as the reality of the flourishing riches of the resurrection of Christ, we have to discern our spirit from our soul—Heb. 4:12; cf. S. S. 2:14-15.

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- E. Christ's resurrection with its power in the life-giving Spirit is the sufficient grace of the processed and consummated Triune God—2 Cor. 12:9; 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:10, 45b, 58; cf. Exo. 3:2-6, 14-15.

III. 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.
- 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 that He might release His eternal life in resurrection to the many grains—10:10-11.
 - 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.

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- 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.