

PHILIPPIANS

Message Eleven

Taking Christ as Our Secret and as Our Power

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:11-13

- I. 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.**
- II. In Philippians 4 Christ is the secret and the power for us to enjoy; we know the secret, and we have the power—vv. 12-13.**
- III. Paul had learned the secret of sufficiency, of satisfaction, of contentment; this secret is actually Christ Himself—vv. 11-12:**
 - A. 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.
 - B. According to the book of Philippians as a whole, the secret Paul learned was simply Christ; Paul took Christ as the secret to experience Christ, being content and rejoicing in any situation and in any matter because of Christ.
 - C. Paul had not only learned a secret; he had been initiated and had learned certain basic principles—v. 12:
 1. Paul had been initiated both into the proper Christian life and into the proper church life.
 2. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was initiated into Christ and into the Body of Christ—Acts 9:3-19, 25-28; 22:6-21; 13:1-4:
 - a. He was initiated into the basic principles of Christ and the church.
 - b. 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; 2:1-4, 19-20; 4:1-3).
 - D. When we are saved and come into the church, the Body of Christ, we need to be initiated by learning certain basic principles—1 Tim. 3:15-16:

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1. We are initiated in Christ, with Christ, and by Christ; because Christ is our secret, we know how to face any kind of situation.
 2. Because the church has a mysterious aspect, we need to be initiated by learning certain basic principles—Eph. 3:3, 9; 5:32.
 3. The secret of the Body is to take Christ as our life, to live Christ, to pursue Christ, to gain Christ, to magnify Christ, and to express Christ; these are the basic principles of the church, the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5.
- E. *In everything* refers to a particular time when we experience a certain thing of the Lord; *in all things* refers to a broad range of experiences over time—Phil. 4:12:
1. Paul could say that both on a particular occasion and on all occasions, both at a certain time and throughout the course of his life, he had learned the secret.
 2. Paul experienced Christ moment by moment:
 - a. He experienced Christ in particular things at particular times.
 - b. He experienced Christ in all things and at all times.

IV. 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":

- A. The secret in Philippians 4 is to do all things in Christ—John 15:4a, 5:
1. 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.
 2. It is sufficient for us to be in Christ, for He is all-inclusive.
 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

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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.
- B. Paul's word in 4:13 is an all-inclusive and concluding word on his experience of Christ:
1. Paul was a person in Christ, and he desired to be found by others in Christ—2 Cor. 12:2a; Phil. 3:9.
 2. In 4:13 he declared that, being in Christ, he could do all things in Him, the very Christ who empowered him; this was his secret.
 3. As a person in Christ, Paul experienced Christ and applied Him in all circumstances—vv. 11-12:
 - a. Paul applied the Christ in whom he could be found—3:9.
 - b. This Christ is real, living, near, available, and prevailing—4:5b.
- C. To be empowered is to be made dynamic inwardly—v. 13:
1. Christ dwells in us, and He empowers us, makes us dynamic, from within, not from without—Col. 1:27.
 2. By such an inward empowering Paul could do all things in Christ.
- D. 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—Phil. 4:8-13:
1. The application of verse 13 is limited by the context of verses 8 through 13.
 2. By the empowering of Christ we can live a contented life and be true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and well spoken of—vv. 11-12, 8.
 3. To live a life of these virtues is much more difficult than doing a Christian work.
 4. We are persons in Christ, who empowers us to live out every kind of virtue; this is to live Christ and to magnify Him in His virtues—1:20-21a.

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- E. If we would experience Christ as the empowering One, we need to let Him live in us (Gal. 2:20), be formed in us (4:19), make His home in us (Eph. 3:17a), and be magnified in us (Phil. 1:20):
1. If we fail to do these things, Christ will not have the way to empower us.
 2. When Christ lives in us, is formed in us, makes His home in us, and is magnified in us, the way is prepared for Him to empower us; then, empowered by the indwelling Christ, we shall be able to do all the things spoken of in 4:8-12.