

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2025**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
PHILIPPIANS AND COLOSSIANS**

Message Five

Taking Christ as Everything to Gain Him That He Might Gain Us

Scripture Reading: Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 16:24; Mark 9:7-8; 2 Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:15a, 16a; Col. 2:16-17

Matt. 3:17—And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.

Matt. 12:18—“Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul has found delight. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will announce justice to the Gentiles.

Matt. 16:24—Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Mark 9:7-8—And a cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him! ⁸And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but Jesus only with them.

2 Cor. 2:10—But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ;

Gal. 1:15—But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

Gal. 1:16—To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

Col. 2:16-17—Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath, ¹⁷Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.

I. Christ is the desire of God's heart—Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Gal. 1:15a, 16a:

Matt. 3:17—And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.

Matt. 12:18—“Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul has found delight. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will announce justice to the Gentiles.

Matt. 17:5—While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!

Gal. 1:15—But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

Gal. 1:16—To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

- A. God's heart's desire is that every person, every matter, and every thing in the universe would express Christ; when everything is headed up in Christ, there will be absolute peace and harmony, and everything in the universe will express Christ—Col. 1:15-19; 3:10-11; Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15-16; Isa. 55:11-13.

Col. 1:15-19—Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, ¹⁶Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him; ¹⁸And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things; ¹⁹For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell

Col. 3:10-11—And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

Eph. 1:10—Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

Eph. 1:22-23—And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, ²³Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Eph. 4:15-16—But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, ¹⁶Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Isa. 55:11-13—So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me vainly, But it will accomplish what I delight in, And it will prosper in the matter to which I have sent it. ¹²For you will go out with rejoicing, And you will be led forth in peace; The mountains and the hills Will break forth before you with a ringing shout, And all the trees of the field will clap *their* hands. ¹³In place of the thornbush, the fir tree will come up; In place of the brier, the myrtle will come up; And it will be to Jehovah as a name, As an eternal sign that will not be cut off.

- B. We exist for the expression of Christ, we preach the gospel for the expression of Christ, our work is for the expression of Christ, and the church is for the expression of Christ—43:7; Phil. 1:20; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:58; John 17:23; Eph. 1:23; 3:19-21.

Isa. 43:7—Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.

Phil. 1:20—According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

2 Cor. 4:5—For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

1 Cor. 15:58—Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

John 17:23—I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

Eph. 1:23—Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Eph. 3:19-21—And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. ²⁰But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, ²¹To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

C. Christ is the reality of every positive thing in the universe—Col. 2:16-17:

Col. 2:16-17—Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath, ¹⁷Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.

1. The entire universe is a great painting drawn by God that speaks of Christ, describes Christ, and is for the expression of Christ—1:15-17; Psa. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20; Heb. 11:3.

Col. 1:15-17—Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, ¹⁶Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;

Psa. 19:1-6—The heavens declare the glory of God, And the expanse proclaims the work of His hands. ²Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night tells out knowledge. ³There is no speech and there are no words; Their voice is not heard. ⁴In all the earth their line has gone forth, And their words to the end of the world. In the heavens He has made a tent for the sun, ⁵And he, like a bridegroom, goes forth from his canopy; He rejoices like a mighty man running the course. ⁶His going forth is from the end of the heavens, And his circuit is unto their ends; And there is nothing hidden from his heat.

Rom. 1:20—For the invisible things of Him, both His eternal power and divine characteristics, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being perceived by the things made, so that they would be without excuse;

Heb. 11:3—By faith we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not come into being out of things which appear.

2. Daily we eat and drink Christ, weekly we have completion and rest in Him, monthly we experience a new beginning in Him, and throughout the year He is our joy and enjoyment—Col. 2:16-18a.

Col. 2:16-18—Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath, ¹⁷Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ. ¹⁸Let no one defraud you by judging you unworthy of your prize, in self-chosen lowliness and the worship of the angels, dwelling on the things which he has seen, vainly puffed up by his mind set on the flesh,

- D. We must see and realize inwardly that God does not want anything other than Christ Himself; God's goal in His recovery is to recover Christ as everything to us—1 Cor. 1:9:

1 Cor. 1:9—God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1. When Christ enters into us, He not only wants to be our life but also our everything; He is our breath of life (John 20:22), water of life (4:14; 7:37-39), bread of life (6:35, 48), light of life (1:4; 8:12), and abode of life (14:23; 15:1, 4-5).
John 20:22—And when He had said this, He breathed into *them* and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

John 4:14—But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

John 7:37-39—Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 6:35—Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.

John 6:48—I am the bread of life.

John 1:4—In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 8:12—Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 14:23—Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

John 15:1—I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

John 15:4-5—Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

2. We must walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work by living Christ, growing Christ, expressing Christ, and propagating Christ in every respect—Col. 1:9-10.

Col. 1:9-10—Therefore we also, since the day we heard of *it*, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰To walk worthily of the Lord to please *Him* in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God,

3. We must allow God to work Christ into us to such an extent that He is everything to us—our exceeding joy and our exceedingly great reward—Eph. 3:16-19; Psa. 43:4a; Gen. 15:1; John 15:11; Rom. 14:17; Phil. 3:14.

Eph. 3:16-19—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, ¹⁷That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are ¹⁹And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Psa. 43:4—And I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And I will praise You with the harp, O God, my God.

Gen. 15:1—After these things the word of Jehovah came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield *and* your exceedingly great reward.

John 15:11—These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and *that* your joy may be made full.

Rom. 14:17—For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Phil. 3:14—I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called *me* upward.

4. The greatest need for us today is to see that Christ is the Spirit indwelling our spirit; if we do not see this point, everything of Christ will be merely an objective doctrine to us—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17—4:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; John 4:24.

1 Cor. 15:45—So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul”; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.

2 Cor. 3:17—4:1—And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

¹Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;

2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

1 Cor. 6:17—But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

John 4:24—God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

5. Christ is also the Word; when we contact the Lord’s Word with our spirit, His words become spirit, and when His words become spirit, the Spirit enters into us so that we can be completely occupied by Him, transformed by Him, and mingled with Him to satisfy the desire of God’s heart—Eph. 6:17-18; John 5:39-40; 6:63.

Eph. 6:17-18—And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, ¹⁸By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every

time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

John 5:39-40—You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. ⁴⁰Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

John 6:63—It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

- E. When we have seen the all-inclusive Christ and have learned the secret of enjoying Him, we will be faithful to the Lord's recovery—Mark 9:7-8; Acts 26:19, 22; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9-10; 2:9-10; 2 Cor. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:9-18; Phil. 1:19-21a:

Mark 9:7-8—And a cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him! ⁸And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but Jesus only with them.

Acts 26:19—Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

Acts 26:22—Having therefore obtained the help which is from God, I have stood unto this day, testifying both to small and great, saying nothing apart from the things which both the prophets and Moses have said would take place,

1 Cor. 1:2—To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* theirs and ours:

1 Cor. 1:9-10—God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹⁰Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

1 Cor. 2:9-10—But as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and *which* have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” ¹⁰But to us God has revealed *them* through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

2 Cor. 2:10—But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ;

2 Tim. 4:9-18—Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Luke alone is with me. Take Mark and bring *him* with you, for he is useful to me for the ministry. ¹²But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³The cloak which I left in Troas with Carpus, bring when you come, and the scrolls, especially the parchments. ¹⁴Alexander the coppersmith did many evil things to me; the Lord will recompense him according to his works. ¹⁵You also guard against him, for he greatly opposed our words. ¹⁶At my first defense no one was with me to support me, but all abandoned me. May it not be counted against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood with me and empowered me that through me the proclamation of the gospel might be fully accomplished and all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will deliver

me from every evil work and will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Phil. 1:19-21—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

1. We should concentrate on Him, not on any persons, things, or matters other than Him; we should focus on Him as our unique center appointed by God so that all the problems among the believers may be solved—1 Cor. 1:9; Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:17b, 18b.

1 Cor. 1:9—God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rev. 2:4-5—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

Col. 1:17—And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;

Col. 1:18—And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

2. If we care only for Christ as our unique center, choice, preference, taste, and enjoyment, this will preserve us in the church in the Lord's recovery until He comes back; otherwise, we will be disappointed or distracted and forsake the Lord's recovery.

II. We must follow the pattern of Paul in Philippians to take Christ as everything:

- A. "To me, to live is Christ"—Paul took Christ as his living—1:21a.
- B. "As always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death"—Paul took Christ as his expression—v. 20.
- C. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"—Paul took the mind of Christ as his mind—2:5.
- D. "Be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith"—Paul took Christ as his lived-out righteousness—3:9.
- E. "On account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ"—Paul considered the knowledge of Christ to be supereminent—v. 8.
- F. "One thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward"—Paul took Christ as his goal—vv. 13-14.

- G. “Brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things”—Paul took Christ as his virtues—4:8.
- H. “I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me”—Paul took Christ as his power to live out Christ as his magnificent living—v. 13.
- I. “I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack”—Paul took Christ as his secret—vv. 11-12; cf. vv. 4-7.
cf. Phil. 4:4-7—Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses every *man’s* understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.
- J. “Our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself”—Paul took Christ as his expectation—3:20-21.

III. We gain Christ that He might gain us (v. 12; cf. Hab. 1:1) according to the following aspects:

Phil. 3:12—Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

cf. Hab. 1:1—The burden which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

- A. Gaining Christ causes us to have a sense of God’s presence (the pneumatic Christ)—John 20:22; Exo. 33:11a, 14:
John 20:22—And when He had said this, He breathed into *them* and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

Exo. 33:11—And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent.

Exo. 33:14—And He said, My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest.

- 1. We should be afraid of only one thing—that we would lose the presence of our Lord—2 Cor. 2:10; cf. Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19.
2 Cor. 2:10—But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ;
cf. Eph. 4:30—And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.
cf. 1 Thes. 5:19—Do not quench the Spirit;

2. “He will enliven us after two days; / On the third day He will raise us up, / And we will live in His presence” (Hosea 6:2)—the reality of the third day is the person, the presence, of the resurrected Christ with the reality of revival (Hab. 3:2).

Hab. 3:2—O Jehovah, I have heard the report concerning You *and* am afraid. O Jehovah, revive Your work In the midst of the years; In the midst of the years make *it* known; In wrath remember compassion.

- B. Gaining Christ causes us to feel bright and clear inwardly—Rev. 22:1; John 1:4; 8:12; Ezek. 1:22, 26.

Rev. 22:1—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

John 1:4—In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 8:12—Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Ezek. 1:22—And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

Ezek. 1:26—And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

- C. Gaining Christ causes us to feel inwardly supplied with Christ as our spiritual food and spiritual drink—1 Cor. 10:3-4; John 6:57; 4:10, 14, 24; 1 Cor. 12:3b, 13.

1 Cor. 10:3-4—And all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed *them*, and the rock was Christ.

John 6:57—As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 4:10—Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.

John 4:14—But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

John 4:24—God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

1 Cor. 12:3—Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus *is* accursed; and no one can say, Jesus *is* Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:13—For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

- D. Gaining Christ causes us to grow in life and be transformed into His image—Col. 2:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2.

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

Rom. 12:2—And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

- E. Gaining Christ causes us to have vitality and to take action—Dan. 11:32b; Acts 1:8; 5:20; 13:1-4; 1 Cor. 14:31; cf. Ezek. 3:1-3; Psa. 68:11-13, 19.

Dan. 11:32—And with his smooth words he will cause those who act wickedly toward the covenant to be profane. But the people who know their God will show strength and take action.

Acts 1:8—But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 5:20—Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.

Acts 13:1-4—Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. ³Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on *them*, they sent them away. ⁴They then, having been sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed away to Cyprus.

1 Cor. 14:31—For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

cf. Ezek. 3:1-3—Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. ²So I opened my mouth, and He gave me that scroll to eat. ³And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I am giving you. And I ate *it*, and it was like honey in my mouth in *its* sweetness.

cf. Psa. 68:11-13—The Lord gives the command; The women who bear the glad tidings are a great host. ¹²The kings of the armies flee. They flee! And she who abides at home Divides the spoil. ¹³Though you lie among the sheepfolds, There are dove wings covered with silver, And its pinions, with greenish-yellow gold.

cf. Psa. 68:19—Blessed be the Lord, who day by day loads us *with good*; God is our salvation. Selah

IV. In order to take Christ as everything and gain Him in all things, we must learn to continually deny our self and turn to our spirit:

- A. We must enter into our spirit completely because the Lord as the Spirit, the reality of the Body, is in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.

2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Eph. 1:17—That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

Eph. 2:22—In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Eph. 3:5—Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,

Eph. 3:16—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph. 4:23—And *that* you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Eph. 5:18—And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

Eph. 6:18—By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

- B. We must learn how to set our mind on the spirit; in other words, we must learn how to trust in God and depend on the Lord; the real secret of living the Christian life for the church life is for us to set our mind on the spirit—Rom. 8:6.

Rom. 8:6—For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

- C. Turning to the spirit is the secret of being a Christian; the way to follow the Lord, enjoy the Lord's riches, live in the reality of the Body of Christ, and function in the New Testament ministry is to continually exercise to reject our self, lose our soul-life, and turn to our spirit—2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 16—4:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 8:16.

2 Cor. 3:3—Since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone but in tablets of hearts of flesh.

2 Cor. 3:6—Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, *ministers* not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 3:16—4:1—But whenever [their heart] turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.¹⁷And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.¹⁸But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

¹⁷Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;

2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Phil. 1:19—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Rom. 8:16—The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

- D. The work of the Lord, which we carry out by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a work that begins with the spirit and ends with the spirit; this work begins from our spirit and ends in others' spirits—1 Cor. 2:4-5, 13, 15; 2 Cor. 3:6; 13:3; cf. Psa. 42:7a.

1 Cor. 2:4-5—And my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵In order that your faith would not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Cor. 2:13—Which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual *words*.

1 Cor. 2:15—But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

2 Cor. 3:6—Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, *ministers* not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 13:3—Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you.

cf. Psa. 42:7—Deep calls unto deep At the sound of Your *water* spouts; All Your waves and Your billows Pass over me.

- E. We have a spirit to contact and receive God and a soul to live out and express God; taking in God, living out God, and expressing God should be our joy, amusement, and entertainment—John 4:10, 14, 24; 6:57; Luke 1:46-47; 1 Cor. 10:31.

John 4:10—Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.

John 4:14—But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

John 4:24—God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

John 6:57—As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

Luke 1:46-47—And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷And my spirit has exulted in God my Savior;

1 Cor. 10:31—Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

- F. The soul was created by God for the purpose of expressing Him, not to have its own enjoyment or preferences; in God's economy there is no selfish enjoyment; Paul's ministry was to dispense the riches of Christ as grace to the believers for their enjoyment—Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Eph. 3:2.

Gen. 1:26—And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Gen. 2:7—Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Eph. 3:2—If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

- G. To deny our self means to reject the soul's desire, preference, and choice; man's first sin was to do something for himself, to satisfy the self—Gen. 3:1-7.

Gen. 3:1-7—Now the serpent was more crafty than any *other* animal of the field that Jehovah God had made. And he said to the woman, Did God really say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden? ²And the woman said to the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³But of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die. ⁴And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die! ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil. ⁶And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and *that* the tree was to be desired to make *oneself* wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave *some* to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

- H. Anything that comes out of our self (the mind, emotion, and will of our fallen soul) is connected to Satan and to demons—Matt. 16:21-27:

Matt. 16:21-27—From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *God* be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You! ²³But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men. ²⁴Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it. ²⁶For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life? ²⁷For the Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each man according to his doings.

1. As the unchaste wife of Jehovah, Israel became evil; we need to realize that once we forsake God, we too can do any kind of evil—Hosea 4:1; Eph. 4:17-21.

Hosea 4:1—Hear the word of Jehovah, O children of Israel; For Jehovah has a controversy With the inhabitants of the land. For there is no faithfulness or kindness And no knowledge of God in the land.

Eph. 4:17-21—This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness. ²⁰But you did not so learn Christ, ²¹If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

2. We must realize that if we do not remain in fellowship with God in our spirit, we lose God's presence and are capable of being in the flesh and of behaving like the worldly people—Phil. 2:1-2; 1 John 1:3; Eph. 4:17-19; Gen. 20; cf. 12:11-13; 13:18.

Phil. 2:1-2—If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions, ²Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

1 John 1:3—That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Eph. 4:17-19—This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.

cf. Gen. 12:11-13—Invalid reference And when he was about to enter into Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, I know indeed that you are a beautiful woman to look at; ¹²And when the Egyptians see you, they will say, This is his wife, and they will kill me; but they will keep you alive. ¹³Now say you are my sister, that it may be well with me on account of you and I may live because of you.

cf. Gen. 13:18—And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?

3. We cannot afford to take a vacation from our fellowship with God in our spirit; our protection is not our self; it is God's presence—1 John 1:3; cf. Psa. 31:20.

1 John 1:3—That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

cf. Psa. 31:20—You hide them in the hiding place of Your presence Apart from the conspiracies of men; You lay them away secretly in a shelter Apart from the contention of tongues.

I. Prayer is the real denial of the self:

1. We do not need to pray in a lengthy way; it is sufficient simply to call "O Lord Jesus"; even such a short prayer means "no longer I but Christ"—Rom. 10:12-13; Gal. 2:20.

Rom. 10:12-13—For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord *is Lord* of all *and* rich to all who call upon Him; ¹³For “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Gal. 2:20—I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

2. Our prayer testifies that we do not exercise our self-effort to deal with the situation (to “cast out demons”); instead, we apply Christ—Mark 9:14-29.

Mark 9:14-29—And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some scribes disputing with them. ¹⁵And immediately, when all the crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and they ran to *Him* and greeted Him. ¹⁶And He questioned them, What are you disputing with them? ¹⁷And one from the crowd answered Him, Teacher, I brought to You my son, who has a dumb spirit; ¹⁸And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth; and he is wasting away. And I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able. ¹⁹And He answered them and said, O unbelieving generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me. ²⁰And they brought him to Him. And when it saw Him, the spirit immediately convulsed him greatly, and falling on the earth, he rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹And He questioned his father, How long has this been happening to him? And he said, From childhood. ²²And it has often thrown him both into fire and into water to destroy him. But if You can *do* anything, have compassion on us and help us. ²³And Jesus said to him, You say, If You can. All things are possible to him who believes. ²⁴Immediately, crying out, the father of the child said, I believe; help my unbelief! ²⁵And Jesus, seeing that a crowd was running together toward *them*, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, Dumb and deaf spirit, I order you, come out of him and enter into him no more. ²⁶And after crying out and convulsing *him* terribly, it came out. And he became as though *he were* dead so that many said that he died. ²⁷But Jesus took hold of his hand and raised him, and he stood up. ²⁸And when He entered into the house, His disciples questioned Him privately, Why were we not able to cast it out? ²⁹And He said to them, This kind cannot come out by any means except prayer.

3. To pray is to practice the vision concerning Christ with His death and resurrection being our replacement so that we may be fully “Christified” to satisfy the desire of God’s heart—vv. 2-13.

Mark 9:2-13—And after six days Jesus took with *Him* Peter and James and John, and brought them up alone into a high mountain privately. And He was transfigured before them, ³And His garments became sparkling, exceedingly white, such as no fuller on earth could whiten *them*. ⁴And Elijah with Moses appeared to them, and they were conversing with Jesus. ⁵And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah. ⁶For he did not know what to answer, for they had become extremely frightened. ⁷And a cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him! ⁸And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but Jesus only with them. ⁹And as they were coming down from the mountain, He ordered them not to relate to anyone the things which they had seen, except when the Son of Man has risen from the dead.

¹⁰And they kept the word, discussing among themselves what rising from the dead was. ¹¹And they asked Him, saying, Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? ¹²And He said to them, Elijah does indeed come first and restore all things. And how *is it that* it is written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be counted as nothing? ¹³But I tell you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him the things that they wished, even as it is written of him.