

Working Saints Outing : Fall 2018 : Post-reading (Week 1)
“The Experience of Christ”, Chapter 20:“One Thing To Do”

Day One - Lord's Day

Philippians 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Philippians 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured *to death*, not accepting deliverance, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection.

ONE THING TO DO

In Philippians 3:8-11 a number of matters are covered. Nevertheless, there is just one outstanding point—to be conformed to the death of Christ so that by any means we may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead. For this, we first need the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. By means of such an excellency, we will be willing to count all things as loss in order to gain Christ and be found in Him in a condition of not having our own righteousness out of the law but having the righteousness that is God Himself lived out of us. Then we will experientially know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. We will also be conformed to His death in order to arrive at the out-resurrection from the dead.

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN THE PROCESS OF RESURRECTION

Arriving at the out-resurrection means that our entire being has been gradually and continually resurrected. On the day the Spirit of God came into us to regenerate our spirit, the process of resurrection began. First, God resurrected our deadened spirit. From that time onward, He has been working within us to resurrect every part of our being—our mind, emotion, and will. Eventually, even our body will be resurrected and transfigured. This means that we will be fully resurrected out of our old being into the new creation. This is God’s economy, God’s intention, God’s goal. Through this process Christ will be thoroughly wrought into us. It is in this way that we experience Christ.

Experiencing Christ is not merely a matter of enjoying His love, grace, or help. To experience Christ is to have Christ wrought into our being to resurrect us out of our old being into the new creation. When the New Jerusalem comes with the new heaven and the new earth, every part of our being will be a new creation. The way to become the new creation is to have our being processed in resurrection from the old creation to the new. All of us are partly resurrected. This means that another part is still unrenewed and remains in the old creation. Therefore, we are in the process of resurrection to be renewed from the old creation to the new creation. This process of resurrection enables us to participate in Christ and to partake of Christ. This is the experience of Christ.

The experience of Christ is not something so superficial as merely receiving grace, obtaining help, or enjoying love from the Christ in the heavens or from the Christ in us. To experience Christ is to be conformed to His death. In this death we are processed in resurrection from the old creation to the new creation. Eventually, the new creation will simply be Christ wrought into our being and enlarged in us.

IN THE PROPHETS ... DOING MANY MARVELOUS THINGS

By faith Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets did many marvelous things (Heb. 11:32-39). Although they did marvelous things, many of them also suffered martyrdom. God performed miracles for some of them, but He did not do such things for all of them. Do not think that if you have faith God will always do something for you. Many times the exercise of our faith will only bring us the enjoyment of God's silence. Perhaps when some are being stoned to death, they would pray, "O Lord, save me from these stones." Instead, the Lord may give them a peaceful silence, not doing anything to rescue them. When Stephen was being martyred, the Lord did not rescue him but gave him such a sweet silence (Acts 7:54-60). To suffer persecution without any rescue coming from the Lord requires great faith.

God's silence is greater than His miracles. Which do you prefer to have—God's miracles or His silence? If we would be honest, most of us would say that we prefer God's miracles. When the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, the mockers said to Him, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross," and, "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matt. 27:40, 42). For at least three of the six hours while the Lord was on the cross, there was silence in the universe. It seemed that there was no God, and the mockers and the blasphemers said whatever they wanted. It was their world and they were the gods at that time. God will remain silent much more often than He will perform miracles. At times, we all must enjoy God's silence by faith.

...They enjoyed God's silence by faith. As we read the history of faith ... we see that it is not just a record of miracles, but also a record of God's silence. He did not always act to help His saints outwardly, but often enabled them to enjoy His silence inwardly.

Verse 35 says, "Others were beaten to death, not accepting deliverance, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection." The better resurrection is not only "the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-6), "the resurrection of life" (John 5:28-29), but also "the out-resurrection" (Phil. 3:11, Gk.), the extra-resurrection, the resurrection in which the Lord's overcomers will receive the reward (v. 26) of the kingdom, after which the Apostle Paul sought. Verse 38, speaking of those who endured such affliction by faith, says that the world was not worthy of them. These faith people are an extra-people, of the highest estate, of whom the corrupted world is not worthy. Only God's holy city, New Jerusalem, is worthy of having them.

(Life-Study Hebrews, Chapter 48, Section 4)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Day Two - Monday

Philippians 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.

2 Samuel 6:11 And the Ark of Jehovah remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months; and Jehovah blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

2 Samuel 6:12a And it was told King David, saying, Jehovah has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that he has because of the Ark of God.

LAYING HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH WE HAVE BEEN LAID HOLD OF

In verse 12 Paul says, “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.” Here Paul seems to be saying, “I have not reached the goal. Rather, I am still in the process. Although I may be ahead of all of you, I have not yet obtained, nor have I been perfected. I am still on the way.” Although the apostle Paul was very mature when he wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, he still said that he had not yet been perfected.

In verse 12 Paul says that he pursued in order to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. This word is not easy to understand. When Paul was Saul of Tarsus, he was zealous for the law. He was zealous to such an extent that he even persecuted the church. The Greek word rendered pursue is also the word for persecute. Thus, when Saul of Tarsus was persecuting the church, he pursued it in a negative sense. On the way to Damascus he suddenly saw a light from heaven, and he was knocked to the ground. Then he heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4). On that day Saul of Tarsus was laid hold of by Christ. He was laid hold of by Christ so that he might lay hold of Christ. Therefore, in Philippians 3:12 Paul seems to be saying, “Christ has laid hold of me for the purpose of my laying hold of Him. It was easy for Him to lay hold of me. By one action as I was on the road to Damascus, He thoroughly laid hold of me. But it takes a long time for me to lay hold of Him. From the day He laid hold of me, I have been doing my best to lay hold of Him. Throughout all the years since then, I have been laying hold of Christ.”

On the day we were saved, we were laid hold of by Christ. He laid hold of us in order that we might lay hold of Him. How good it is to be laid hold of by Christ! Do you realize that even now He is embracing you so that you may lay hold of Him? To repeat, for Him to lay hold of us is easy. By one action He laid hold of us all. But our laying hold of Him is not once for all. Rather, it is an ongoing process. When I consider the situation among today’s Christians, I am very disappointed. But when I consider the brothers and sisters in the churches, I am quite encouraged, for many of them have been laying hold of Christ. Continually and gradually, daily and even hourly, we need to lay hold of more of Him. The more we lay hold of Him, the more we are resurrected.

In other words, the more we lay hold of Christ, the more we are renewed and transformed from the old creation into the new creation. Because this is a continuing process, Paul says that he was still on the way to lay hold of Christ. He had not yet laid hold of everything of Christ.

Philippians 3:13 and 14 say, “Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but 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.” In these verses Paul seems to be saying, “I have not yet reached the end of the process in God’s economy, but I am pursuing toward the goal. When I was Saul of Tarsus, I pursued the church in a negative way, but now I am pursuing Christ in a positive way.” Paul undoubtedly was of a very strong character, both when he was Saul of Tarsus and when he was Paul the apostle. Being a strong character, he never did anything halfway. When he was Saul of Tarsus, he persecuted the church negatively, and after he became the apostle Paul, he persecuted Christ positively.

THE HOUSEHOLD BEING BLESSED

Second Samuel 6:11 says, “And the Ark of Jehovah remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months; and Jehovah blessed Obed-edom and all his household.” Jehovah's blessing in the Old Testament was to the household. While the Ark remained in the house of Obed-edom, Jehovah blessed the whole household. The unit of the blessing is the household, not the individual.

This principle is not just confined to salvation. It governs many matters in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The house is considered one unit. God's children, especially those who are the head of their house, should realize that God deals with man according to households. If you are ignorant of this fact, you will miss much. If you are the head of a family, you need to lay hold of this fact. You need to say, “Lord, You have told me that You are dealing with my household, not with just myself alone. Therefore, I ask You to save my whole household.”

Not only does the head of a household need to lay hold of this fact, but other members of the household also need to inquire of the Lord concerning their father's house. Rahab was not the head of her house; she had a father. But Rahab held to God, and her household was blessed and saved. It is very good if you are the head of your household because you can speak for your household. But even if you are not the head of your household, you can still speak in faith as Rahab, saying, “Lord, turn my household to You to receive Your grace and blessing.”

(Raising Up the Next Generation for the Church Life, Chapter 5, Section 4)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Day Three - Tuesday

Philippians 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,

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

Joshua 13:1 Now Joshua was old and advanced in age; and Jehovah said to him, You are old and advanced in age, and very much of the land remains to be possessed.

OUR NEED TO PERSECUTE CHRIST

In order to experience Christ, in this sense we need to persecute Him. When some hear such a word, they may say, "It is heresy to say that we, the lovers of Christ, should persecute Him." Yes, we need to persecute Christ. We should say, "Lord Jesus, I don't care whether You are willing or unwilling, You must be for me. Even if You say that You are not ready for me to experience You, I shall persecute You to make You ready." When this is viewed in a positive sense, it is not too much of an extreme. Mary Magdalene was an example of one who persecuted the Lord Jesus in a positive way. Early in the morning on the day of His resurrection, she pursued Him. She persecuted the resurrected Christ and persuaded Him to do something that He was not willing to do. We all need to seek the Lord in such a way.

FORGETTING THE THINGS BEHIND

Have you ever persecuted the Lord Jesus in a positive way? Probably not. Have you ever sought the Lord by persecuting Him until He goes along with you? Whenever you persecute Him in such a positive way, you will forget the things behind. Only those who are lukewarm, who are neither cold nor hot in loving the Lord, consider the things of the past and remember their experiences of years ago. But when you persecute the Lord, you have no time to think about the past. Thus, the best way to forget the past is to be fully occupied with pursuing the Lord right now. If we are not occupied in this way, we will be continually occupied with the things of the past, either positive things or negative things. We must be busy with pursuing Christ and persecuting Him in a positive way. If you get into the spirit of Paul, you will realize how busy he was in persecuting Jesus and in compelling Him to be his enjoyment. There was no room in his mind for considerations about the past. To repeat, to consider the past is a sign of being lukewarm. But when you are burning and are persecuting the Lord Jesus in a positive way, you have no room in your mind to think of the past. Instead, you are occupied with pursuing toward the goal.

THE GOAL AND THE PRIZE

Both the goal and the prize are Christ. Christ is within us, but He is also before us at the end of the race as the goal that we are striving to reach. To say that Christ is the goal means that He is the highest enjoyment. The Christ who is in us for our enjoyment today is

not the goal. The goal is the highest enjoyment of Christ, that is, the out-resurrection. No matter how much we experience Christ today, we have not yet reached the goal of the highest enjoyment of Christ. This experience of Christ is still before us. As soon as we reach the goal, the goal will immediately become the prize. When you obtain the prize, you may shout with the enjoyment of the highest experience of Christ. At that time you will have the out-resurrection as the top enjoyment. Therefore, the enjoyment is Christ, the experience is Christ, the goal is Christ, and the prize is Christ. Christ is the enjoyment within us, and Christ is the goal set before us. We need to pursue toward the goal so that we may gain the prize.

To pursue Christ in this way we need to be aggressive and to exercise ourselves very much. No lazy person can be a persecutor of Christ. Every persecutor of Christ has a strong character. I say again that we all must pursue Christ in a persecuting way. We need to pray, "Lord Jesus, I intend to persecute You. All day long I will be Your persecutor. I will compel You to be for me and to be my experience." Have you ever prayed in this way? We need to pray like this, telling the Lord that we will persecute Him until He becomes our experience. If we do this, eventually we shall arrive at the goal and receive the prize.

GOD'S NEED FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE TO PURSUE CHRIST

Paul was one who struggled to pursue Christ in order to gain Christ (Phil. 3:8, 12). However, very few of today's Christians, including us, are like Paul. We may be seeking Christians, but we may pursue Christ only to a certain extent, being content with a routine church life and routine work and service for Christ. Following such a routine does not enable us to endeavor to gain Christ. Because so many Christians do not pursue Christ in order to gain Him, God needs the overcomers. ... Although God has been working with the church for nearly two thousand years, God has not yet gained what He desires. Thus, as early as the first century, the Lord came in to call for overcomers (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 20-21; 21:7), and today He is still sounding out the call for the overcomers. Nevertheless, even among devoted Christians it is hard to find some overcomers, who are pursuing Christ in order to gain Him.

At the time of Joshua, there were two or three million Israelites, but there were not many Joshuas and Calebs. There were not many endeavoring ones, genuine pursuers of God. Without such ones both the good land and the Giver of the land would have been idle. Both the land and the Giver of the land needed certain ones to take the land, possess the land, and enjoy the land. Those who possessed the land did a favor to the One who gave them the land.

We today need to take and possess the land for Christ. We need to gain Christ for Christ. If we do this, we will do Christ a favor. However, if we go on living a routine Christian life and church life, we will not be able to gain the land for Christ. For this, God needs some overcomers. God is calling for overcomers, but who will answer His call? Who will respond to God's call by pursuing Christ in order to gain Christ? I hope that many among us will do Christ a favor by responding to God's call for overcomers.

(Life-Study of Joshua, Judges & Ruth, Chapter 6, Section 2)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Day Four - Wednesday

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

Philippians 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you.

Philippians 3:16 Nevertheless whereunto we have attained, by the same *rule* let us walk.

Philippians 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

THE UPWARD CALLING

The prize spoken of in Philippians 3:14 is the prize of God's upward calling. God is in the heavens calling us. Not only has He called us, but He continues to call us. Furthermore, as we run the race and pursue toward the goal, the angels are cheering us on. What an impressive picture this is!

If we mean business with the Lord, we must be a persecutor of Christ. All the lovers of Jesus should be His persecutors. We should say, "Lord Jesus, because I love You, I will persecute You until I persuade You to be for me." The Lord Jesus appreciates this. For example, any husband would like his wife to be such a loving persecutor. Suppose a wife would say to her husband, "I will persecute you until you stay home with me so that I can love you. I love you, and I don't want to lose your presence. You must stay home to enjoy my love." Surely any husband would appreciate such a wife. This is the best way to love the Lord and to seek Him. We should say, "Lord, even if You want to go, I will not let You go. You must stay with me." The seeker in Song of Songs persecuted her Beloved in this way. Even if He had begged her to let Him go, she would have refused. May we all persecute the Lord in this way!

THINKING ONE THING

Philippians 3:15 says, "Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you." We should not think other things but just think this one thing. This one thing is to experience Christ. Regardless of what stage of life we are in, we all should think this one thing, that is, to pursue Christ to the uttermost.

WALKING BY THE SAME RULE

Verse 16 continues, "Nevertheless whereto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk." Even those who are young and not yet full grown should walk by the same rule. Some may think that Paul here is very domineering and speaks like a dictator, even telling the saints what to think. He says that whether they are young or old, experienced or inexperienced, they need to walk by the same rule. This verse should be read in the light of 2:2, which says, "Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing."

Furthermore, in Philippians 4:2 Paul says, “I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.” The trouble among today’s Christians is that nearly everyone thinks a different thing. It is difficult to find one great preacher who works together with another. On the contrary, each one has his own empire and thinks and speaks his own thing. This is the reason that there is nothing but division and confusion in Christianity today. We must not repeat the history of Christianity. The way to be kept from such a sad repetition is to think the one thing. The one thing that we are to think is revealed in Philippians 3:7-15: it is Christ as our experience, enjoyment, goal, and prize.

ONE FLOW, ONE TREE, ONE STREET

There is only one flow of life, one tree of life, and one street of life. If your way is different from my way, something is wrong. Either you are wrong, or I am wrong, or possibly both of us are wrong. If nothing is wrong, then we must be in the same way, for there is only one way. Cities today have so many streets and so many ways; thus, it is easy to be lost. But there is no such problem in the New Jerusalem. That city has only one street and one way. The picture of the New Jerusalem also reveals that the street must be laid out in a spiral pattern. The city itself is shaped like a mountain with the throne of God at the peak. From the foundation of the city, the street passes all twelve gates through which the people enter. Then it winds spirally upward around the city until it reaches the throne. From the throne, the river of life flows downward in the midst of the street until it reaches all twelve gates of the city. Regardless of which gate you enter, if you go on in the one street, you will eventually reach the throne. The street ascends upward, but the flow of life is downward. The life of God flows to us to bring us upward. Whenever we have the flow within us, it will always bring us the way, and when we follow the way, the street will bring us to the throne of God. The enjoyment of the flow of life imparts the way of life, and the way of life brings us to God. If we follow only the way of life, we will be brought into the presence of God. In the church life today there is only one flow of life, one tree of life, and one way of life. The way of life is always upward. The more we follow this way, the more we will go onward and upward to the throne.

(The Vision of God's Building, Chapter 17, Section 4)

TO WALK WITH GOD

Do you expect to be raptured? If you do, you need to walk with God. We should not only call upon the name of the Lord, but should also walk with God. The calling must be followed by the walking. To walk with God is not to override God, not to be presumptuous, not to do things according to our own concept and desire, nor to do anything without God. To walk with God is to take Him as our center and everything, to do things according to His revelation and leading, and to do everything with Him. It is not only to live for God and to do things for God, but to live and to do things according to God and with God. Enoch walked with God in such a way, living and doing things according to God and with God, not according to his own desire or concept, nor according to the current of the age in which he lived.

(Life-Study of Genesis, Chapter 26, Section 3)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Day Five - Thursday

Romans 14:1 Now him who is weak in faith receive, *but* not for the purpose of passing judgment on *his* considerations.

Romans 14:2 One believes that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables.

Romans 14:3 He who eats, let him not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for God has received him.

NEITHER IMPOSING NOR OPPOSING

When some hear that we should think the one thing, they may ask about things such as foot-washing or speaking in tongues. If you want to practice foot-washing or tongue-speaking, you should be free to do so. But do not impose these practices on others. Regarding matters like this, we should neither impose nor oppose, because either imposing or opposing will cause difficulty.

In 1963 some from a Pentecostal group and some from a group with a Brethren background proposed that we come together in Los Angeles to practice the church life in oneness. I told them that it is wonderful for Christians from different groups to come together to practice the church life but that in order to have the church life we all had to drop our differences. I pointed out that if we want to have the Body spoken of in Romans 12, we must learn the lessons in Romans 14. Without Romans 14 it is impossible to have Romans 12. Furthermore, I told them that Christians have been divided and still are divided over various practices. Thus, if we want to have the oneness in the proper church life, we must drop all the differences. Those from each group said that they were happy with this and promised to drop the differences. However, in just a few weeks problems developed over the matters of speaking in tongues and playing a tambourine in the meetings. Those from the group with the Brethren background simply could not tolerate these things. Neither those who favored speaking in tongues and playing the tambourine nor those who opposed these practices would listen to any word about not insisting on their way. Eventually, that meeting had to be disbanded.

We should not oppose anything unless it involves idolatry or fornication. Some have asked me about the so-called holy rolling. I said, "If someone is so repentant over his sins that he wants to roll on the floor, that is all right. We should not oppose it. But if someone insists upon this or imposes it upon others, he is divisive. We bear with anything or go along with any practice as long as it is not sinful or a cause of division."

In 1966 we began to practice pray-reading, and in 1968, the calling on the name of the Lord. I can testify that I never insisted upon these practices. However, in a certain place messages were repeatedly given opposing pray-reading and calling on the name of the Lord. As Christians, we need to see that we are not for a particular practice or for a certain way. Rather, we are for one thing—to pursue after Christ.

We all need to think this one thing and to walk by this same rule. If someone is so happy in a meeting that he jumps up and down, I would not oppose him. However, if someone seeks to impose this practice on others, insisting that all the saints or all the churches engage in it, I would not agree with it, because we are not for jumping but for pursuing after Christ. We do not impose anything, nor do we oppose anything. Instead, we are simply pursuing the all-inclusive Christ. We are not here for any way or practice; we are here only to pursue the Lord and to be conformed to His death.

Whatever we do must be done by being conformed to the death of Christ. If we do everything in this way, there will be no problems, and we will surely think the one thing. Christ must be our experience, goal, and prize. Christ is everything. In the Lord's recovery there is nothing but Christ. This is the only way for us to take in the Lord's recovery.

NOT IMPOSING ANYTHING

As a servant of the Lord, wherever you go, you should not impose anything on the saints and on the local churches. You should not push anything or touch anything that may become a factor of creating division. Suppose you are a worker of the Lord and are also very much for speaking in tongues. One day you come to Los Angeles and find out that the church here does not pay attention to speaking in tongues and may even take the attitude of being against it. Perhaps in the first two weeks you do not say anything about it, but probably in the third week the "fox tail" will come out. After another week, maybe you will stand up to impose something, saying, "Why don't you speak in tongues? What's wrong with speaking in tongues?" You may be able to convince a certain number to go along with you and get the same experience as you have had. Then a division is created.

Brothers, we are sent out by the Lord just to minister Christ to others and help others to know Him. We should be willing to be rejected. It is wrong to try to win people over to you. Wherever you go, never say anything different from the current situation there to create any division. For example, for the Lord's table, you may be strongly in favor of using one cup for all partakers. Suppose you go to a church where many small cups are used. Don't be surprised by it, don't talk about it, and don't even consider it. Go along with it and take the small cup. Do not raise the question of whether one cup or many cups is correct. We are not sent by the Lord to minister cups to people. Some people are legal in insisting on using one cup. In the end, they become spiritually dead. The Lord does not honor that. We know what is right and what is wrong, but there is no need to pay attention to these trivial things.

In Romans 14 the apostle Paul wrote concerning eating (vv. 2-3) and the keeping of days (vv. 5-6). He was very clear about what was right and what was wrong, but his attitude was not to impose anything upon others, not to push anything, and not to insist on anything. If they keep the days, they keep them to the Lord; if they don't keep the days, they don't keep them. As long as they do it to the Lord, it is good enough. This is the attitude we have to take. Then we will not bring damage to the saints and the churches, but we will be a help to them.

*(The Life and Way for the Practice of the Church Life,
Chapter 13, Section 3)*

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Day Six - Friday

Philippians 4:2 I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another, not setting your mind on the high things but going along with the lowly; do not be wise in yourselves.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice, be perfected, be comforted, think the same thing, be at peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

THINKING THE SAME THING

Although the situation in Philippi was very good, unlike the situation in Corinth, there was still a problem because the saints there were not all thinking the same thing. Thus, Paul besought Euodias and Syntyche, two of his co-workers in the gospel, to think the same thing. It is possible that one of the sisters was in favor of Judaism. Whether or not this was so, the fact remains that they were not thinking the one thing. According to the first chapter of Philippians, there was envy and strife even in the preaching of the gospel (vv. 15-16). Surely this was an indication that some were not thinking the one thing. This is the reason that in chapter 2 Paul asked the saints in Philippi to make his joy full. If there was any fellowship of spirit, any consolation of love, any tenderheartedness and compassions, they were to make Paul's joy full. He wanted them to make his joy full by thinking the same thing, having the same love, and being joined in soul.

We all need to learn to think the one thing, that is, to be occupied with pursuing Christ. We should not be concerned about foot-washing, head covering, speaking in tongues, or any other such matters. Let us leave these things alone and think about the experience and enjoyment of Christ. We need to pray, "Lord, teach me how to persecute You. I don't care for so many other things. I only care to pursue You." Do not be troubled by things such as the playing of a tambourine in the meetings. Playing a tambourine is not our goal, prize, or enjoyment. Our enjoyment, experience, goal, and prize are Christ. If others want to play the tambourine, I will not oppose it. After they play the tambourine for a certain period of time, there will eventually be an opportunity for me to share Christ with them. This illustrates the fact that we must all learn that for us there is simply one thing: Christ as our experience, enjoyment, goal, and prize. We do not insist on anything, and we do not oppose anything. If we take this way, we will maintain a good spirit in the churches for the experience and enjoyment of Christ.

HONOR CHRIST AND ALLOW HIM

We need to honor Christ and allow Him to do everything. Do not persecute Christ regarding things such as speaking in tongues, foot-washing, or playing the tambourine. Instead, persecute Him until He becomes your experience.

We need to say, “Lord, it is not up to me whether or not Your people speak in tongues. Lord, I persecute You so that You will be my experience. Lord, when the opportunity comes in the meeting, I would like to share with Your saints something concerning my experience of You.” This is the only thing we need to do. Let us all do the same thing and think the one thing. Do not have any other consideration, and do not be bothered by all the different practices. There is only one thing for us to do: pursue Christ and let Him become our experience, enjoyment, goal, and prize.

KEEPING THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 4:2-3 says, “With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.” The word all governs both lowliness and meekness. We need all lowliness and meekness. We need long-suffering, and to bear one another in love. We have to pray ourselves into the reality of these verses. We need to pray so that our prayer can bring us into lowliness and meekness. To have this oneness among us is not a small matter. It is very, very crucial. This oneness in the church life governs our daily life, our family life, and our church life.

This oneness cannot be prevailing unless it is in the Spirit. This is why it is called “the oneness of the Spirit.” If we have a kind of oneness that is not in the Spirit, that oneness is not genuine and will not last long. The oneness of the Spirit is constituted with virtues such as lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, bearing one another in love, and diligence. We have to be diligent to keep the oneness in the uniting bond of peace. These are not natural virtues, but they are the divine attributes expressed in our humanity to be our human virtues. We should live a life full of the divine attributes expressed in our humanity to be our human virtues. In these virtues there is the keeping of the oneness of the Spirit.

In Philippians 2:2-3 Paul says, “Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing, doing nothing by way of selfish ambition nor by way of vainglory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves.” The apostle Paul's joy could be made full when the saints were thinking the same thing. Our unrenewed mind runs in many directions and is out of control. Additionally, we need to have the same love for all the saints. If I love one brother more than another brother, this will create problems. If we live by our natural life, it is impossible for us to have all of the items in Philippians 2:2-3. These items can be realized only through the divine life expressed in our human life. When these divine attributes are expressed in our human life, they become our human virtues. It is in these virtues that we have the oneness of the Spirit.

This oneness of the Spirit is altogether the basic element of our church life. If we are short of this, we “commit suicide” in the church life. Some of us may have experienced this kind of spiritual suicide already. Because the oneness is so crucial to our spiritual life, we have to go further to see what we have to be aware of in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit.

(A Timely Word, Chapter 1, Section 1)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Day Seven - Saturday

Philippians 4:2 I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.

Philippians 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice, be perfected, be comforted, think the same thing, be at peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

THINKING THE SAME THING

In 2 Corinthians 13:11 Paul charges the Corinthians to think the same thing. thinking the same thing should be the main factor for the distracted and confused Corinthians to be perfected, adjusted, put in order, and restored. In his first Epistle (1 Cor. 1:10), Paul had already exhorted them to think the same thing: “But 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.” The Greek word translated “attuned” in 1 Corinthians 1:10 is the same word that is translated “mending” in Matthew 4:21. It means to repair, to restore, to adjust, to mend, making a broken thing thoroughly complete, joined perfectly together. As a whole, the Corinthian believers were divided, broken. They needed mending to join them perfectly together that they may be in harmony, having the same mind and the same opinion.

We may take as an illustration the keyboard of a piano. Each key needs to be properly in tune in order to be in harmony with all the other keys. Likewise, Paul exhorted the Corinthians to be attuned in the same mind, that is, to think the same thing and not to have peculiar thoughts. We all need to learn by grace to think the same thing.

(Life-Study of 2 Corinthians, Chapter 58, Section 2)

THE DEMAND TO BE LIKE-MINDED

In the book of Philippians Paul also exhorted the brothers to be one: “For your fellowship [oneness] unto the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now” (1:5). Later, Paul spoke of another aspect in verses 15 and 17: “Some preach Christ even because of envy and strife....others announce Christ out of selfish ambition.” This was not a universal condition of the church but a local matter in Philippi. Some brothers preached Christ in oneness, while some preached Christ out of envy, saying, “If you can preach, I can too. If you can do it, why cannot I?” So they also preached.

In Philippians 2:2 Paul exhorted, “Think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing.” I would like to point out the phrase that you think the same thing. This does not refer to the universal church. Although the universal church can learn from this instance, this word especially refers to the Philippians, since Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. The Christians, the brothers, in Philippi needed to think the same thing.

It is useless for them to think the same thing as the brothers in the church in Shanghai or the brothers in the church in Lanchow. They have to think the same thing as the brothers in Philippi. This is the commandment of the Bible. thinking the same thing must have locality as its minimum requirement. If this is lacking, all doctrines are idealistic and imaginary. It is amazing that many brothers are very spiritual in the heavens, but fleshly on earth. Their idea is very spiritual but their practice is fleshly.

Following this, Paul said that if they thought the same thing, had the same love, were joined in soul, and thought the one thing, his joy would be made full.

“Doing nothing by way of selfish ambition” (v. 3a). This word was spoken to the Philippians. The Philippians should not have done anything by way of selfish ambition. Paul brought out the reason for doing things by selfish ambition: Some covet vainglory. These seekers of vainglory are easily separated from the brothers. Those who desire to have glory before man get into trouble with others. Some are proud and esteem themselves highly; they are unable to be one with others. “But in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves” (v. 3b). This will enable us to be one with others. Some care only for their own things and are very selfish; so it is also easy for them to cause trouble. Paul continued, “Not regarding each his own virtues, but each the virtues of others also” (v. 4). This is the reason that many people cannot think the same thing, cannot have the same love, cannot be joined in soul, cannot be one with others. Some care only for themselves, some are proud, some seek glory and desire others to applaud them. These kinds of people can never be one with others. We must learn to be humble, not seeking glory from man, and we must learn to take care of others. Then we can be one with other children of God. This is the scriptural principle, and we need to follow it accordingly.

Paul praised the Philippians for their fellowship (oneness) in preaching the gospel, but in fact, they had contentions. This made the exhortation in chapter two necessary. There were contentions in Philippi not only among the brothers but also among the sisters. In chapter four Paul especially mentioned two sisters: “I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord” (v. 2). These two names are feminine. We do not know how much of a story lies behind this word; Paul did not reveal this to us. He only said, “I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.” This correction shows us on the one hand that there was strife in Philippi, and on the other hand that this strife was limited to this locality because of the names he mentioned. By now I think we should see at least one thing: The unity of the Body or the unity of the Holy Spirit in the Bible refers to the unity in locality. Unity apart from locality is entirely vain. We cannot say that we are able to be one everywhere except in our own locality.

(Further Talks on the Church Life, Chapter 4, Section 16)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Working Saints Outing : Fall 2018 : Post-reading (Week 2)
“The Experience of Christ”, Chapter 23: “In the Empowering One”

Wk2 Day One - Lord's Day

Philippians 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

John 15:5 I 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.

1 Timothy 1:12 I give thanks to Him who empowers me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He has counted me faithful, appointing *me* to the ministry,

IN THE EMPOWERING ONE

Regarding the experience of Christ, the book of Philippians is the most wonderful Epistle in the New Testament. Philippians 1:20 indicates that in any situation Christ can be magnified in us. In the next verse Paul says, “To me, to live is Christ.” Chapter 2 takes us deeper into the experience of Christ. Verses 12 and 13 of this chapter reveal that we need to obey the inner operating of God. God is operating in us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure (v. 13), but we still need to work out our own salvation daily. Day by day we need to be saved, rescued, and delivered. We work out such a daily salvation by obeying God’s inner operating. In chapter 3 Paul proceeds to tell us that we need the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord (v. 8). This means that we need the excellency in knowing Christ. On account of this excellency, we should count everything as loss. Furthermore, we should suffer the loss of all things and count them as refuse in order to gain Christ and to be found in Him. Paul was a person absolutely in Christ. For this reason, in 2 Corinthians 12:2 he refers to himself as “a man in Christ.” As a man in Christ, his desire was to be found always in Christ. Being found in Christ, he did not have his own righteousness but the righteousness that was God Himself lived out of him. Because he lived in this condition, he could know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. All this enabled him to be conformed to the death of Christ so that, by any means, he might arrive at the out-resurrection from the dead.

BEING IN CHRIST

In Philippians 4 Paul says that he had learned the secret both to abound and to lack (v. 12). In everything and in all things he had learned the secret. Paul could declare, “I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me” (v. 13). Thus, at the end of the book of Philippians, we find a man who could do everything in Christ.

The secret of doing all things is to be in Christ. John 15:5 affords a contrast to this. In this verse the Lord said, “Apart from Me you can do nothing.” Therefore, Philippians 4:13 says that we can do all things in Him, and John 15:5 says that apart from Him we can do nothing. We all need to learn to say, “Apart from Him I can do nothing, but in Him I can do all things.” The secret is to be in Him.

THE SECRET OF BEING IN CHRIST

I am concerned that many of us do not know how to be in Christ. You may say, “Today we all are in Christ.” Yes, doctrinally we are in Him, but experientially we may not be in Him. First Corinthians 1:30 says that of God we are in Christ. Furthermore, Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 say that we have been baptized into Christ. Thus, we all have been put into Christ. However, the Bible also says that after we have been put into Christ, we need to abide, remain, stay, in Him (John 15:4). To be put into Christ is one thing, and to remain in Christ is another. Being put into Christ does not depend upon us; it is a sovereign act of God. How we thank God that we are in Christ! To abide in Christ, however, does not depend on God; it depends on us. Now that God has put us into Christ, we need to abide in Him. However, after we have been put into Christ, we may stay there for only a short time and then not remain in Him.

EXPRESSING THE HUMAN VIRTUES BY BEING IN CHRIST

Paul's word [in Phil. 4:13] is a promise. He “who empowers me” is Christ, who is also the Spirit of Jesus Christ with a bountiful supply, as mentioned in Philippians 1:19. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ Himself with a bountiful supply. He supplies and enables us to live out the things that are true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and well spoken of, as well as any virtue and any praise. All we need is just to be in Him, and He will empower us to live out these virtues.

The phrase *in Him who empowers me* does not sound like proper Chinese. Consequently, the translators of the Chinese version of the Bible rendered this verse as “I am able to do all things by Him who empowers me.” They rendered *in* as “by,” as in, *by depending upon*. Suppose I cannot walk; then I have to walk by depending upon someone who gives me support. This is the meaning of *by*. But the Bible does not say “by Him” but rather “in Him.” This is hard to comprehend. Let me use electricity as an illustration. For example, there are electric lamps, telephones, and other appliances in a house. But if there is no flow of electricity, then the lamps will not light up, the telephones will not work, and all other electrical appliances will not operate. When the electricity is transmitted, then the electric lamps, telephones, and appliances will be “in the electricity”; consequently, the lamps will light up, the telephones will work, and the motors of the other appliances will begin to operate. Strictly speaking, the electric lamp lights up not *by* the electricity but *in* the electricity. Christ is like the electricity; He is the One who empowers us just as the electricity empowers the electrical appliances. We are able to do all things in the “electricity,” in Christ, who empowers us.

(The Subjective Experience of the Indwelling Christ, Chapter 5, Section 3)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Wk2 Day Two - Monday

1 John 2:27 And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.

1 John 2:10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause of stumbling in him;

THE SECRET OF ABIDING IN CHRIST

The first secret in this chapter is that in order to do all things we need to be in Christ; the second secret is that to be in Christ we must abide in Him. For us to be in Him is to abide, remain, stay, in Him. Now we need to learn the secret of how to abide in Him. To be in Him is a secret, to abide in Him is a secret, and to know how to abide in Him is still another secret. Concerning this matter of abiding in Christ, the New Testament does not leave us in darkness. The same apostle who wrote about abiding in Christ in his Gospel also speaks about this in his first Epistle. According to 1 John 2:27, the way to abide in Christ is to take care of the anointing, for the anointing teaches us to abide in Him. Therefore, the secret of abiding in Christ is to care for the anointing. We must abide in Him according to the anointing.

I assume that we all know that the anointing is the moving and the working of the all-inclusive Spirit within us. The all-inclusive Spirit is the compound Spirit typified by the compound ointment in Exodus 30:22-33. The compound ointment described there pictures the contents of the all-inclusive Spirit. One of these ingredients pictures the all-inclusive death of Christ, and another portrays the resurrection. This compound Spirit is very active within us; He is moving, operating, working. His moving within us is a kind of teaching, and this teaching is like a sign or indicator. For example, as you drive your car, you see red and green lights as well as many other road signs. These signs show you when and how to drive. Likewise, the teaching of the compound Spirit within us shows us how to abide in Christ. We abide in Him by the teaching of the inner anointing.

THE SECRET OF CARING FOR THE ANOINTING

We have seen that the secret of doing all things is to be in Him, that the secret of being in Him is to abide, and that the secret of abiding is to take care of the inner anointing. But now we must learn the secret of how to take care of the anointing. Every saved person has the anointing within. But day by day and hour by hour, most do not take care of it. Before I go on, let me give an example of not taking care of the anointing. Suppose the brothers living in a brothers' house are all very natural and talk with one another in a natural way. There is no need for them to exercise their will to talk, for the words simply pour out of their mouths. Early in the morning, one brother may ask another about his roommate. The two begin to talk, and this talk opens the gates of Hades. As these brothers are talking, something within them is saying, "Don't talk." That brief word is the teaching of the anointing, which is nothing less than the living and the working of the indwelling Christ. However, the brothers may keep on talking and thus disobey the anointing.

Although the indwelling Christ is living in us, too often we do not live with Him. He lives His way, but we live our way. When we rise up in the morning, He desires to live His life, but we live our life. This causes a discrepancy, and this discrepancy is abnormal. Normally, Christ should live in us, and we should live according to His living. In this way we live by Him. This, however, should not be mere doctrine; it must be our daily living. For example, instead of talking in a natural way, we should talk when He talks. He speaks within, and we express His speaking. If He does not talk, then we should not talk either. In this way He talks in our talking. This is one life coming from two persons. We as the first person are the expression of the inner person, who is Christ.

ABIDING IN THE LORD BEING A CRUCIAL TRUTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

To abide in the Lord is to enjoy the Lord's life. I remember that not long after I was saved, I was helped to know that the Lord was in me and I was in the Lord. Although I knew this, I was very puzzled by it. Like today's young people, I did not want to be one who just says what others say and follows mindlessly; I wanted to understand clearly. Therefore, I sought to understand what it is for me to be in the Lord and for the Lord to be in me. At the time, however, I did not know how to seek, and I felt that this would be very difficult because to me the Lord was vague, incomprehensible, and abstract. I lived in a house, and after eating I would have food in my stomach. These matters were easy to understand, but how could I say that I am in the Lord? What was the Lord really like? How could I be in Him? In addition, the most mysterious part, how could He be in me? I truly couldn't figure this out.

The more I studied this truth, the clearer I became. However, I also felt that this matter became more complicated. Later, I made another discovery, that the New Testament not only uses the word *in* but also uses the word *abide*. John 15 says that we should "abide" in the Lord, but the Chinese Version says that we should "always be" in the Lord. This disregards the main verb. Here it does not mean to be in the Lord always; it means to abide in the Lord. In John 15 the word *abide* is not a light word but a very important one; it means to dwell, not merely to stay awhile. In Greek the words for *home* are *oikos* and *oikia*. When Paul wrote Romans and 1 Corinthians 3:16, the word he used for *dwells* has the noun *oikos* as its principal root, and it was made into the verb form *oikeo*, which means "makes home." Then in Ephesians 3:17 Paul strengthens the meaning of this word by adding the preposition *kata* (meaning "deep down"), making it *katoikeo*, which means "deeply make home." This shows us that the matter of abiding spoken of in the Bible is not so simple. There are altogether four steps: the first is "in," then "abiding in," then "making home in," and finally "deeply making home in," that is, making home by sinking in deep roots.

(Abiding in the Lord to Enjoy His Life, Chapter 2, Section 1)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Wk2 Day Three - Tuesday

Psalm 45:7 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; / Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness above Your companions.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me, / Because Jehovah has anointed Me To bring good news to the afflicted; / He has sent Me to bind up *the wounds* of the brokenhearted, / To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of *the eyes* to those who are bound;

THE PROBLEM OF NOT OBEYING THE ANOINTING

In doctrine we may be very clear about this, but we may not practice it in our daily life. I am not concerned for doctrine but for your living. In your daily life do you live the life that Christ is living within you? Perhaps as you get up in the morning, you want to talk, but He does not. In such a case there is a discrepancy between your living and His. Normally, your living and His living should be one. But instead of this, in your talking too often there are two persons with two different livings instead of two persons with one living. Therefore, as you are about to talk about a certain brother, the Lord, who does not want to talk, moves within you to give you a certain feeling. You sense something moving within. Nevertheless, many times you do not care for this inner feeling. Thus, although the Lord does not want to talk, you proceed to talk anyway, sometimes gossiping for more than an hour. All this talk is disobedient to God's inner operating. When you gossip in this way, you are not obeying the anointing.

The problem here is that in our talking we very often get off the cross. When Christ was on the cross, He was tempted to prove that He was the Son of God by coming down from the cross (Matt. 27:40). Although the Lord did not come down from the cross, we do so very often, even many times in one day. I must confess that this has been my own experience. I am familiar with this illness because I have suffered from it myself for years. Therefore, I can illustrate this according to my experience. Early in the morning, I may talk too much. Unable to eat breakfast in a good way because I am condemned for this, I go to my room and confess to the Lord, saying, "Lord, I confess how natural I am. Please forgive me. I hate my natural man and my talkativeness. Lord, put my tongue on the cross." Every kind of repentance and confession is a killing. After being killed in this way, I am on the cross again. But later in the day some brothers may come to visit me, and again I may find myself talking too much. Although something within tells me to be quiet, I keep talking. It seems that there are no brakes on my spiritual car. Later, I regret my talkativeness and confess to the Lord once again. This time it is difficult even to speak to the Lord, because I feel so ashamed in His presence. Nevertheless, I ask Him to forgive me once again. Through my confession I get on the cross once again. I believe that this is not only my experience but also yours.

The problem is that we get off the cross. Yes, it is a fact that we have been crucified with Christ, but are we on the cross right now? The secret of taking care of the inner anointing is to stay on the cross.

OBEYING THE ANOINTING

Romans 8:9 says, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.” This verse shows that Christ and the Spirit are inseparable. The Spirit of Christ is not only Christ's representative but His transfiguration. We experience Christ as the Spirit. When we live in the Spirit of Christ, we live in Christ, and when we walk according to the Spirit of Christ, we walk according to Christ. Therefore, if we want to touch Christ, experience Christ, and live in Christ, and thereby obtain Him, we must walk according to the Spirit of Christ and set our mind on the Spirit of Christ, that is, walk according to and set our mind on the Spirit. When we walk according to the Spirit, we obey the anointing in us, and we abide in Him and enjoy His riches (1 John 2:27).

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT WE HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH HIM

Galatians 2:20 says, “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” In order to experience Christ living in us, we must see and acknowledge that we have been crucified with Him. The Spirit reveals not only Christ to us but also the cross so that we may experience Christ through the cross. Christ died on the cross for us, and the cross enables Christ to live in us. We experience the cross by the Spirit, and we experience Christ through the cross. Only when we stand in the position of our co-crucifixion with Christ can He become our experience. Only when we no longer live can Christ live in us. May we acknowledge our co-crucifixion with Christ and thus deny ourselves, handing all our rights over to Him and letting Him be our life and live in us. May we truly say, “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me!”

WALKING IN HIM

Colossians 2:6 says, “As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him.” To walk in Christ is to act and live by Him. Since we have the Lord Jesus as our life and have Him living in us, we should no longer act or live according to ourselves. We should let Him live by taking Him as our life and walking in Him. This is the way that we afford Him the opportunity to be our enjoyment within and our expression without.

PUTTING ON CHRIST

Romans 13:14 says, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” This means that we should put Him on outwardly so that He is manifested through us. If we live in Him and act and walk by Him, He will be manifested and magnified through us. We should not do anything that will prevent Him from being manifested through us. Just as we should be filled with Him inwardly, we should put Him on outwardly. Then we will gain Him and even become Him, both inwardly and outwardly.

(Christ and the Cross, Chapter 5, Section 4)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Wk2 Day Four - Wednesday

Philippians 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Galatians 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.

Matthew 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.

Philippians 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

THE SECRET OF STAYING ON THE CROSS

This brings us to still another secret—the secret of staying on the cross. Because it is impossible for us to do this ourselves, we must find the secret of doing it. The secret of staying on the cross is that Christ is within us as resurrection power. Remember, Philippians 3:10 speaks of knowing Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings; it also speaks of being conformed to His death. Being conformed to His death comes after knowing the power of Christ's resurrection. Through the power of resurrection that is within us, we are conformed to His death. Although we cannot keep ourselves on the cross, within us there is the power of resurrection, and by this power we can stay on the cross. When we stay on the cross, we are not committing suicide, because we are not actually keeping ourselves there; it is the power of resurrection that keeps us there.

In the foregoing chapter we considered Galatians 5:24, which says that they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts. This crucifixion of the flesh takes place by the Spirit. This is indicated by the fact that the next verse says that if we live by the Spirit, we should also walk by the Spirit. This indicates that the crucifying of the flesh takes place by the Spirit within us. Therefore, we are not actually the ones who crucify it; it is the Spirit as the power of resurrection who does this. In this regard we need to remember Romans 8:13, which says that by the Spirit we put to death the practices of the body. We have the Spirit within us. No matter how weak we may be, He is in us as the source of our experience of crucifixion. We cannot crucify our flesh or put to death the practices of the body, but the Spirit can do it. This is why, as we pointed out in the previous chapter, we need to cooperate with the indwelling Spirit.

We have also seen that Matthew 16:24 says that we must deny the self. However, not even the denial of the self can be done by ourselves; rather, it is done by the One who lives in us. By Him it is easy for us to deny the self. But apart from Him it is impossible. Regarding the denial of the self, there is One within us who is always waiting for our cooperation. If we say Amen, He will do the work and keep us on the cross.

This experience of the cross is not a suffering but an enjoyment. We enjoy the gracious working of the indwelling Spirit. Hour after hour and day after day, this indwelling Spirit keeps us on the cross. Therefore, by the Spirit as the power of resurrection, we are being conformed to Christ's death.

The result of this is that we arrive at the out-resurrection from the dead (Phil. 3:11). The power of resurrection works to conform us to Christ's death. Then by our being conformed to His death, the out-resurrection becomes our portion. Thus, resurrection gives us the experience of death, which in turn brings us to the out-resurrection. This is the reason that A. B. Simpson could say in one of his hymns, "'Tis not hard to die with Christ / When His risen life we know." Because we have resurrection life within us, it is not difficult to die. In another of his hymns A. B. Simpson says, "Oh! it is so sweet to die with Christ." Because Christ is in us, it is sweet to die with Him. The resurrected One in us is the One who has experienced the crucifixion. Thus, it is not hard for us to die. On the contrary, it is sweet to die with Him because by dying with Him we enjoy Him.

Resurrection brings us into death, and death ushers us into higher resurrection, even the outstanding resurrection. Our natural life, desires, intentions, and tendencies are crucified not by ourselves but by the indwelling Spirit. This is the way to take care of the inner anointing. By taking care of the inner anointing, we abide in Him; by abiding in Him, we are in Him; and by being in Him, we can do all things.

THE FUNCTION OF THE ANOINTING

Although the anointing does not change us, it has a good function. Firstly, it rebukes us, and secondly, it tells us to return to the law of life. Perhaps all of us have misunderstood 1 John 2:27, which says that "the same anointing teacheth you of all things." The anointing does not teach us to do everything; it teaches us to abide in Christ. Some brothers and sisters may wonder whether or not to go shopping and they pray to the Lord, saying, "O Lord, should I go shopping or stay home? Lord, grant me the anointing." But the Lord may say, "My anointing doesn't care for your going shopping or staying home. My anointing only cares that you abide in Me. As long as you abide in Me, you may go anywhere. If you abide in Me, whatever you do will be all right." If we abide in Christ, we may go anywhere. But remember this crucial clause—"if we abide in Christ." As long as we abide in Christ, God does not care where we go or what we do. Many who are concerned about marriage pray to the Lord regarding it, saying, "Lord, should I marry this one?" Some can testify that although they prayed in this way, the Lord never answered their prayers. Many young brothers have prayed, "Lord, let me know whether this sister is the dear one You have chosen for me." But the more the brothers pray like this, the more confused they will be. I know of some sisters who have prayed for ten years about getting married without receiving an answer. If the Lord were to answer them, He would probably say, "I don't care about your marriage. I only care whether or not you abide in Me. If you abide in Me, you may get married. But if you do not abide in Me, you should not even marry the best brother." The only thing that counts is whether or not we abide in the Lord. In God's economy, it is not a matter of our doing; it is absolutely a matter of our being. It is a matter of what we are. And what we are depends upon the life according to which we live day by day.

...[As an example]... It is easy to know a brother by his presence. With even a short glimpse, we can easily recognize his presence. But it takes a great deal of time to get into his nature. Perhaps his wife, who has lived with him for many years, is the only one who has gotten into his nature. We may know this brother's face, but we do not know his nature. Similarly, it is easy to apprehend God's presence, but difficult to know His nature in our being. To tell people to walk in the presence of God is rather natural and religious. It is not life. [We must] know God's nature within our being and live according to it. This is what God desires.

Enlightenment and inspiration:

(Life-Study of Hebrews, Chapter 68, Section 4)

Wk2 Day Five - Thursday

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Always rejoice,

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Unceasingly pray,

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

THE SECRET OF ENJOYING THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

First Thessalonians 5:16 through 18 says, “Always rejoice, unceasingly pray, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Instead of periods after verses 16 and 17, there are commas. This punctuation indicates that always rejoicing, unceasingly praying, and giving thanks in everything are the will of God in Christ Jesus for us. God has a will regarding us. This will is that we must constantly rejoice, pray, and give thanks. This is the last secret, the practical secret. Without it, all the other secrets mean nothing.

Because we are so forgetful, we need to practice remembering all these secrets. Hence, let us go over them again. The first secret is that if we would be able to do all things, we need to be in Christ. The second secret is that to be in Him requires that we abide in Him. The third secret is that to abide in Him we need to take care of the inner anointing. The fourth secret is that in order to take care of the inner anointing we must remain on the cross. We have seen that we in ourselves are not able to stay on the cross; instead, we often come down from the cross. We need to know the fifth secret: remaining on the cross by means of the indwelling Spirit. All this is of no avail without the sixth secret, the secret of how to enjoy the indwelling Spirit. This secret is to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in everything.

Suppose as I am ministering, a brother stands up and says, “Brother Lee, I don’t agree with your speaking. You must stop.” At such a time I need to rejoice. To fail to rejoice is to get off the cross. Thus, if a brother rebukes me and tells me to stop speaking, I should say, “Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! How happy I am!” The sisters should also do this when their husbands give them a difficult time. Sisters, instead of being troubled by your husbands, rejoice in the Lord. Whenever we are not rejoicing, we come down from the cross. The indwelling Spirit works with us in our rejoicing.

For years I have encouraged the saints to release the spirit and to exercise the spirit. Now I wish to point out that the best way to release the spirit is to rejoice. To rejoice is not merely to be happy; it is to make a joyful noise. When we are joyful, we rejoice.

In 1 Thessalonians 5 the word rejoice is modified by the word always, and the word pray by the word unceasingly. Furthermore, in everything we are to give thanks to God. This means that even if a sister’s husband gives her a difficult time, she should praise the Lord. Rejoicing always, praying unceasingly, and giving thanks in everything is the will of God. These three things, which have been ordained by God, are like small screws in a machine. But without these screws the entire machine cannot operate.

Whenever we fail to give thanks in something, the indwelling Spirit is choked. In 1 Thessalonians 5 the matter of not quenching the Spirit is related to always rejoicing, to praying unceasingly, and to giving thanks in everything. If you do not rejoice, you quench the Spirit. If you do not pray or give thanks, you also quench the Spirit. The way to stir up the Spirit is to always rejoice, to unceasingly pray, and to give thanks in everything. The Spirit here is the power of resurrection. Although we have this Spirit within us, the Spirit is often choked because we do not rejoice, pray, or give thanks.

UNWILLING TO OBEY GOD'S WORD

The Bible shows us that being negligent before God in our intention to obey His Word is also a sin. Brothers and sisters, how much of God's commandments have you read, and how much have you obeyed? How many husbands love their wives, and how many wives submit to their husbands? A wife once said that she knew that she should submit to her husband; however, she always argued a little before submitting. She eventually realized that she has never had any true submission according to the standard of God's commandment. This, of course, is sin.

How many Christians realize that being sorrowful is sin? The Bible says that we have to *Always rejoice*. How many Christians have obeyed this commandment? We have to realize that being sorrowful is sin. Everyone who does not rejoice has sinned. God's commandment is to be anxious in nothing. If we become anxious, we have sinned. According to God's commandment, being sorrowful and anxious is to sin. Of course, according to man, being sorrowful and anxious is not sin. However, God's Word says that sorrow and anxiety are sins.

We should give thanks in everything. It is God's commandment that we give thanks in everything. In everything we should say, "God! I thank You and praise You!" Even when we encounter difficulties, we should still say, "God! I thank and praise You!" There is a story about a woman with nine children. She thought that the word on not being anxious must be very wrong. She argued that a mother has to be anxious. She thought that not being anxious was a sin. She had lost two children through anxiety, and she thought she had to raise up the other seven in anxiety. This sister did not see that anxiety is a sin. She thought that it was her duty to be anxious. To Always rejoice is a commandment of God. To be anxious for nothing is also a commandment of God. To give thanks in everything, even more, is a commandment of God. Victory and strength enable one to keep the commandment of God. Those who are unable to overcome cannot keep God's commandments.

I have to talk about these matters because the daily walk of Christians today is far from being godly. Some brothers can only see the faults of others; they cannot appreciate the virtues of others. Only words of criticism come forth from their mouths. ... Brothers and sisters, all of these are sins. Every overcoming Christian lives above these things, not under them.

(The Overcoming Life, Chapter 1, Section 3)

Enlightenment and inspiration:

Wk2 Day Six - Friday

Philippians 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 Because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Philippians 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Philippians 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

KEEPING CERTAIN LEGALITIES

In order to be healthy, we need to keep four legalities: eating, drinking, breathing, and sleeping. Although Christians often condemn legality, we need to be legal about these things. In so many other things we should not be legal, but when it comes to eating, drinking, breathing, and sleeping, we must be legal. In like manner, rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks in all things are legalities. When some brothers hear this, they may say, “Brother Lee, I cannot thank the Lord for a wife such as mine. You don’t know how bad she is. If you had such a wife, you would sympathize with me.” However, no matter what kind of wife a brother has, he must rejoice and give thanks in everything. Each of us must do this for ourselves. Just as we cannot eat, drink, or breathe for others, so we cannot pray, rejoice, or give thanks for others.

An incident that took place in my hometown years ago illustrates this. A certain sister became deceived; she decided to give up eating and pray all day long. We tried our best to convince her to eat, telling her that we were concerned that she would die if she continued to go without eating. However, she still refused to eat. She had a good heart to pray for the church and for the saints, but because she would not eat, she eventually died. We could do many things for her, but we could not eat for her. Eating is a legality that we all must keep for ourselves. In like manner, if you do not pray, rejoice, or give thanks, I do not know what to do for you. The best thing I can do is to ask the Lord to make you willing to pray, to rejoice, and to give thanks.

I believe, however, that the saints are willing to pray, to rejoice, and to give thanks. Concerning rejoicing, we must practice not rejoicing occasionally but rejoicing always. The same is true regarding prayer. We should not pray just once in a while but unceasingly. What breathing is to our physical life, prayer is to our spiritual life. Breathing is more necessary than eating, drinking, or sleeping. Praying must be first in our spiritual life. We must breathe by praying unceasingly. There is no need for us to be alone in our room in order to pray. While we are speaking, listening, or busy with other things, we can pray. In everything we do, we are able to breathe. Medical science has learned that breathing deeply is a great help to our health. Regarding our spiritual breathing, we should not pray in a shallow way but pray from the depths of our being. When we pray like this, we stir up our spirit and fan the fire within us. Then we will rejoice and give thanks to the Lord. If we do these three things, the indwelling Spirit within us will be burning. By this burning Spirit within, we will be willing to remain in death and to keep the flesh, the self, and the natural life on the cross. This experience of death will usher in resurrection.

As we have pointed out, death is the gateway into resurrection. The deeper we go into death, the greater will be our experience of resurrection. When we have an outstanding death, we will also have an outstanding resurrection. The way to have such an outstanding death is to always rejoice, to unceasingly pray, and to give thanks in everything. When we do these things, we are in Him and in His resurrection. In Philippians 3 Paul speaks of knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection. Here Christ equals the power of resurrection. When we are in Him, we are in the power of resurrection. In the power of resurrection we can do all things. This is the experience of Christ recorded in the book of Philippians. In chapter 1 Paul speaks of Christ being magnified in him, whether through life or through death, and in chapter 4 he says that he can do all things in the One who empowers him. The way to be in the empowering One is to rejoice, pray, and give thanks. If we do these things, the Spirit will work out the experience of death, and this death will bring us into resurrection. Eventually, we will arrive at the outstanding resurrection from the dead.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE OVERCOMING SAINTS

In every age there are a few overcoming saints. Although they will be resurrected at the same time as the other saints, they will have an out-resurrection, a better resurrection, the top resurrection. This can be illustrated by students at a graduation ceremony. The top three students graduate at the same time as the other students, but their graduation is a special graduation, a graduation with a reward, a graduation with honors. The resurrection of the overcoming saints will come with a special and glorious reward.

According to the context in Philippians, this out-resurrection is something that will be attained and obtained by those who give up everything, suffer with the Lord, strive to pursue His reward, endeavor to run in the Lord's way, and are martyred for Him. Therefore, the out-resurrection is different from the resurrection that Paul speaks of in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. There he speaks of the resurrection of all believers (a general, ordinary resurrection); here he speaks of a resurrection in which only those saints who are martyred for the Lord and who overcome can participate (in a special, out-resurrection). By the word in 1 Thessalonians, the apostle Paul seems certain that he would obtain the general, ordinary resurrection, since all who die in Christ participate in this resurrection. But in Philippians 3 the apostle does not have the assurance that he will obtain the special, out-resurrection. He says that he counts all things loss for the Lord, suffers with the Lord, and is being conformed to the Lord's death so that perhaps he might attain to the out-resurrection. He does not consider that he has already obtained it. He continues to strive to pursue it, to run hard in the hope that he would obtain this special resurrection. Only those who are faithful to the Lord unto death can participate in this special out-resurrection. All the saints will be resurrected, but only those who are faithful to the Lord unto death will participate in the out-resurrection. Any student graduates if he passes, but only the top students in the class will graduate with honors. Other students graduate, but they will not receive a prize or obtain honor. Similarly, every dead believer will be resurrected, but not all will receive a resurrection of reward, the out-resurrection. Only those who have overcome will obtain a reward in addition to being resurrected. Therefore, the resurrection that they obtain is a resurrection with a reward; it is a special out-resurrection.

Wk2 Day Seven - Saturday

Philippians 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you

Matthew 6:28 And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Consider well the lilies of the field ...

Colossians 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,

GOD'S SOVEREIGN ARRANGEMENT

Our circumstances are always sovereignly arranged by God. Sometimes His sovereign arrangement puts us in a low situation, and at other times in circumstances that are quite good. Paul realized that even though the supply had come from the church at Philippi, his circumstances were still in the hand of God. In God's sovereign arrangement, the Philippian church did not send the supply [timely]. Perhaps they had the heart to send him a gift, but not the opportunity until Epaphroditus could come. When the opportunity was available, the Philippian believers sent a gift to Paul. This supply brought him out of the condition of humiliation, want, and abasement and set him on a peak. But he did not know how long that would last. Nevertheless, he had the assurance that he knew both how to be abased and how to abound, both how to abound and how to be in want. He had learned the secret; he had been initiated into the basic principles of Christ and the church.

In Philippians 4:13 we find a basic principle related to the apostle's secret of sufficiency in Christ: "I can do all things in Him who empowers me." Paul was a person in Christ (2 Cor. 12:2), and he desired to be found in Christ by others. Now he declared that he could do all things in Him, in 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 concerning our organic relationship with Him in John 15:5: "Apart from Me you can do nothing."

IN HIM WHO EMPOWERS US

In 4:13 Paul refers to Christ as the One who "empowers me." To be so empowered is to be made dynamic inwardly. Christ dwells in us (Col. 1:27). He empowers us, makes us dynamic, from within, not from without. By such inward empowering Paul could do all things in Christ.

In 4:13 we find the secret to which Paul refers in verse 12. Here Paul says that he is in Christ, in the One who empowers him. In chapter three Paul testified that he pursued Christ in order to gain Him and be found in Him. Now in 4:13 Paul says that he is in Him. In Christ as the One who empowers him Paul could do all things. He could say, "Christ is my secret of sufficiency. As long as I have Him and as long as I am in Him, I can do all things in Him."

To appreciate Paul's word we need to join the phrase *in Him* in 4:13 to the same phrase in 3:9. In 3:9 Paul aspired to be found in Him; in 4:13 Paul declared that being in Him he could do all things in the One who empowered him. This is the secret.

Have you seen the secret? Do you have this secret? Our circumstances may change. In certain circumstances we may abound, and in others we may be abased.

Whether we abound or are abased, the enjoyment of the Lord is the same. It may even have been the case that Paul enjoyed Christ more when he was abased than when he was abounding. Perhaps he enjoyed more of Christ when he was poor than when he was rich. This, however, is my understanding. Perhaps Paul would say, “No, I enjoy Christ equally when I am abased and when I am abounding. It makes no difference to me whether I am rich or poor, high or low. The enjoyment of Christ is the same.” Even though the enjoyment might be the same, the taste might still be different. Whether or not there was any difference in enjoyment or in taste, it is certain that Paul had learned the secret.

COUNTERACTING ANXIETY

If we have learned the secret, we shall know how to counteract anxiety. If you are in poverty, there is no need for you to be anxious or to worry. The Lord is still at hand, and He will take care of you. By nature, we are given to worry, to anxiety. This is true as much of the rich as it is of the poor. Those who are poor have their particular worries, and those who are rich have theirs. Only those who are truly in Christ in their experience and who are inwardly empowered by Him have no need to worry or to be anxious.

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We have pointed out that when the church at Philippi did not have the opportunity to supply Paul, he was in want. He was humiliated and abased. Do you think that during that time of abasement Paul was worrying? We may have the ground to answer this question with both a yes and a no. On the one hand, we can say that Paul was not worried, for he tells us that he had learned the secret both to be abased and to abound. On the other hand, there is an implication that, in referring to his situation, he must have had some human feeling of worry or anxiety. If Paul did not have any worry, why then did he refer to his situation? When he was in want, he must have had some feeling about it. Otherwise, he would not have told the Philippians that he rejoiced in the Lord greatly that “at length” they had caused their thinking for him to blossom anew. This positive word implies that, prior to receiving the supply through Epaphroditus, Paul was concerned. It seems as if Paul was saying, “Your thinking for me has blossomed anew. For a period of time, you may have forgotten me and did not care for me. Your thinking concerning me passed through a time of winter. But now I rejoice that your thinking for me has blossomed anew.”

The very fact that Paul knew how to be abased indicates that he experienced feelings of abasement. He knew what it was to have worry and anxiety in times of suffering. But at those times he applied the secret of the indwelling Christ. He applied the very Christ in whom he could be found. This Christ is real, living, near, available, and prevailing. This was the Christ who was Paul's secret.

(Life-Study of Philippians, Chapter 29, Section 3)