

Working Saints Outing Pre-Reading
IN HIM-THE SECRET OF EXPERIENCING CHRIST

DAY 1

Philippians 4:12-13

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.

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

v.12 “in everything” (footnote 3)

In everything means in each matter; in all things means in all matters. Together, these two phrases encompass all the things in the course of human life. Paul learned the secret of experiencing Christ — to experience Him in everything and in every place.

v.12 “I have learned the secret” (footnote 4)

Lit., I have been initiated. The metaphor here refers to a person’s being initiated into a secret society with instruction in its rudimentary principles. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was initiated into Christ and the Body of Christ. He then learned the secret of how to take Christ as life, how to live Christ, how to magnify Christ, how to gain Christ, and how to have the church life, all of which things are rudimentary principles.

v.13 “in” (footnote 1)

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 was able to do all things in Him, the very Christ who empowered him. This is an all-inclusive and concluding word on his experience of Christ. It is the converse of the Lord’s word in John 15:5 concerning our organic relationship with Him, “Apart from Me you can do nothing.”

PAUL’S SECRET—BEING IN CHRIST

As we have pointed out, in the book of Philippians Paul uses a number of unusual expressions. One of these expressions is found in chapter four, verse 12. Here Paul says, “In everything and in all things I have learned the secret” (ASV). The phrase “learned the secret” indicates that Paul had come into a new situation, a new environment. Whenever we are put in a new environment, we need to learn the secret of living in that environment. For someone from the West to go to the Far East is for him to go into a new environment. In order to live, he must learn the secret of life there. For example, when brothers and sisters from the United States visit the Far East, they need to learn the secret of eating with chopsticks. If they do not learn the secret, they will not be able to eat.

In Philippians 4:12 Paul says, “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I have learned the secret both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Here Paul seems to be saying,

“In all things I have been instructed with the secret so that I know how to be in want and how to abound. I have been initiated with a type of secret knowledge.” What is the secret Paul learned? Because Paul had been instructed with the particular secret, he could handle any situation, whether he was rich or poor, filled or hungry. The secret is in Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things in Him who empowers me” (Gk.). The secret is not that Christ is in us; it is that we are in Him. [*The Experience of Christ*, p.90]

Most of us do not know how to apply the fact that we are in Christ. Take riding in a car to the meeting as an example. My secret in coming to the meeting is simply to sit in the car and to let someone else drive. What a problem it would be if I refused to get into the car or did not like being in the car and did certain foolish things to get out of the car! On the day we were saved, God put us into the heavenly car, the best car in the universe. The name of this car is Christ. On the day we were saved, we were put into Him. If we would exercise to be in Him in a practical way, we would not be active to do so many things on our own. Instead, we would simply rest and be at peace. If we are in Christ, we shall be at rest and not endeavor to overcome negative things such as our temper. Although we were put into Christ on the day we were saved, to the feeling of many Christians they are not yet in Christ.

ENJOYING SALVATION BY BEING IN CHRIST

I appreciate the fact that Christ lives in us. There is even a hymn in our hymnal with this chorus:

Christ liveth in me,
Christ liveth in me;
Oh! what a salvation this,
That Christ liveth in me.

However, simply to say that Christ lives in us is to be too objective. We also need to experience living in Christ and doing all things in Him. What a salvation it is to live in Him! If we live in Him, we shall enjoy His salvation day by day. This salvation can be compared to riding in a car. As long as we remain in the car, we enjoy salvation. When I ride in a car, I am not worried about what direction I am going or anything else. I may rest, pray, or enjoy sight-seeing. I simply rest and enjoy myself. In like manner, when we are in Christ, we should simply rest and enjoy ourselves. We should enjoy the life in Christ.

My burden in this message is that we would all learn the secret of being in Him. We can do all things in Him. This may seem to be a small secret, but actually it has great significance. This secret is the way for us to experience Christ and to enjoy Christ. It is also the secret of having more of Christ accumulated within us. [*The Experience of Christ*, p.91]

Enlightenment and inspiration:

DAY 2

Philippians 4:11

Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.

Galatians 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.

v. 20 “no longer I” (footnote 3)

No longer I does not indicate an exchanged life, a life in which Christ comes in and we go out, for later in this verse Paul said, “I live.” As regenerated people, we have both the old “I,” which has been crucified (Rom. 6:6), concerning which Paul said, “No longer I,” and a new “I,” concerning which Paul said, “I live.” The old, terminated “I” was without divinity; the new “I” has God as life added to it. The new “I” came into being when the old “I” was resurrected and God was added to it. On the one hand, Paul had been terminated, but on the other hand, a resurrected Paul, one who was regenerated with God as his life, still lived. Furthermore, although Paul said, “No longer I,” he also said, “It is Christ who lives in me,” for it was Christ who lived, but it was in Paul that He lived. The two, Christ and Paul, had one life and one living.

v.20 “faith” (footnote 5)

In contrast to the way we live the physical and soulish life, we live the divine life not by sight nor by feeling. The divine life, the spiritual life in our spirit, is lived by the exercise of faith, which is stimulated by the presence of the life-giving Spirit.

PRACTICING THE SECRET

Such a secret needs to be put into practice. In order to practice this secret, we firstly need to realize that Christ lives in us. Secondly, we must deny the flesh and the natural man. We should count all things loss and not treasure or appreciate anything of our natural man, such as our humility or other virtues. All of our good points, attributes, and virtues need to be counted loss. We should not have any confidence in anything other than Christ. Thirdly, we should not do anything by ourselves, for we are not alone. Another person lives in us.

Marriage is an illustration of this. Before we were married, we were alone. If we wanted to open the window, we simply opened it. But when we were married, we became bound and limited. All the wives are tied to their husbands, and all the husbands are tied to their wives. In my married life I certainly have learned to live by another person, by my wife. With Christ, we have another person, not married to us, but living in us. However, many of us do not care for Christ’s living in us. On the contrary, it seems that we ourselves are everything. But we should be nothing, and let Him be everything. We all need to realize that we are no longer persons alone, but that we have another One living in us. Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, is living in

us right now. We do not merely have His life; we have Him. Therefore, we are no longer alone. Now that He lives in us, we need to learn to live by Him and not by ourselves.

Day after day may go by without our doing anything by Christ. This indicates that we do not practice living by Christ. This is a serious matter. In our daily living we need to practice living by Christ. If we are about to visit the saints or show love, we need to check who is doing it, we or Christ. Before we act, we should wait a while to see whether it is we or Christ who is acting. By doing this we allow the Christ who dwells in us to live for us. This is the practice of the secret.

Paul had been instructed in this secret so that he knew both how to abound and how to be in want. He could do all things in Him. It is sufficient simply to be in Him, for He is all-inclusive and all-sufficient. For example, as we ride in the car, we have complete trust in the car. Christ is more sufficient and more inclusive than any car. Therefore, we should put our full trust in Him. Whatever we do we should do in Him, not in ourselves. We should do everything in Him and by Him. This is the secret Paul learned and the secret we need to learn today. We do not need more teaching, but more practice of this secret. We need to practice doing everything in Him. [*The Experience of Christ*, p.92]

The secret in Philippians 4 is to do all things in Christ. Whatever we do should be done in Christ, not in ourselves; this is the secret Paul learned and the secret we need to learn today. It is sufficient for us to be in Christ, for He is all-inclusive. The way to experience Christ is to do everything in Him. If we do all things in Christ, we shall experience Christ, enjoy Christ, and accumulate Christ; this is the way to become rich in Christ and to have many rich experiences of Christ (Eph. 3:8). The issue of practicing the secret of being in Christ is that for us to live is Christ; because we do all things in Christ, we live Christ (Phil. 1:21a).

Paul's word in 4:13 is an all-inclusive and concluding word on his experience of Christ. Paul was a person in Christ, and he desired to be found by others in Christ (2 Cor. 12:2a; Phil. 3:9). In 4:13 he declared that, being in Christ, he could do all things in Him, the very Christ who empowered him; this was his secret. As a person in Christ, Paul experienced Christ and applied Him in all circumstances (vv. 11-12). Paul applied the Christ in whom he could be found (3:9).

This Christ is real, living, near, available, and prevailing (4:5b).

[*Crystallization-Study Philippians msg 11*]

Enlightenment and inspiration:

DAY 3

Luke 10:38-39

38 Now as they went, He entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her home.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word.

NO PREFERENCES

As we practice this secret, we should not have any preference concerning what we do in Him. We, however, may prefer to do certain things in Him, but not other things. We hope that we could keep these things from Him. In this regard, we are like husbands and wives who have secrets from one another. Every husband has kept certain things from his wife, and every wife has kept certain things from her husband. The reason we do this is that we have our own preferences and do not want others to know about them. In the matter of living by Christ we also have preferences. Because of all these preferences, we seldom turn to Him and ask Him what He wants to do in a given situation. But we need to pray, "Lord Jesus, do You want me to do this? If so, show me Your way to do it, Lord." We have Christ living in us, but we may not live by Him or do things in Him. The secret in Philippians 4 is to do all things in Him. The way to experience Christ is to do everything in Him.

For more than fifty years, the Lord has been teaching me to live by Him. I still have not graduated, because I have not been that faithful. Sometimes I was faithful to live by Him for several days. In those days nearly everything I did was in Him. But then I would become unfaithful again. Consider your Christian life. Have you always been faithful in the matter of living by Him and doing all things in Him? Christ does not want us to do anything. He wants to do everything for us. In a sense, we have already signed the agreement for Him to do this. This took place on the day we consecrated ourselves to Him. By consecrating ourselves to Him, we offered ourselves to Him. However, after consecrating ourselves, we have not been faithful to live by Him. Rather, we have continued to live by ourselves. Without exception, we all have broken our agreement. [*The Experience of Christ, p.93*]

HIS PREFERENCE

Do you know what was on the Lord's heart while He sat in Martha's home in Bethany? The Lord's heart was set on His death...While the disciples were on the way to Jerusalem with the Lord, they were busy in such matters as arguing who was greater and in forbidding others to do things for the Lord. In particular, the brothers were busy with their ambition. The sisters, on the contrary, were busy in serving, in ministering. But among the sisters there was one— Mary—who was not busy. She was calm and sat in silence listening to the Man-Savior's word. As a result, she came to know what was on the Lord's heart.

Mary realized that He was going to Jerusalem to die. Twice the Lord unveiled His death to His disciples, but they did not have an ear to hear the Lord's word. Mary, however, heard the Lord's word concerning His death, and she took this

word. Having heard and received the Lord's word concerning His death, she looked for the opportunity to anoint Him before He died (Matt. 26:12).

In 10:38-42 the Lord may have been speaking to Mary about His death. At that juncture, what was on the heart of the Savior was His approaching death.

When He was close to Jerusalem, in Bethany, He was received into the house of Martha. While there, He was speaking the word, and Mary was listening. As we have pointed out, He may have been talking concerning His death. The brothers did not have a heart for this, and neither did Martha, who was busy serving. The only one who had a heart for the Lord's word concerning His death and who sat quietly listening to His word was Mary. She sat at His feet and listened to the Savior's word, a word that expressed His desire and preference.

The two cases in 10:25-42, the Lord's portraying Himself as the good Samaritan and His being received by Martha, are related. The first shows the Savior's compassion and love for our salvation, and the second reveals His desire and preference for our service to Him. We need to know the Lord in these two aspects. We need to know His compassion and love in salvation and His desire and preference for our service.

Before doing anything for the Lord, we must first know His compassion and love related to our salvation and His desire and preference related to our service. This implies that we leave our natural man on the cross. There is no need for us to do anything for our salvation, and we should not do anything in ourselves in the Lord's service. With respect to both salvation and service we should remain on the cross. Then we shall know the Man-Savior's compassion and love for our salvation and His desire and preference for our service.

We have seen that the name Martha probably comes from Chaldean and means "she was rebellious" and that Mary comes from Maria, Greek for Hebrew Miriam, meaning "their rebellion." These words come from the same root, a root that means rebellious or rebellion. However, it is possible for a rebellious one to become a submissive one. In nature Mary was rebellious, but she became submissive not only to the Lord's compassion and love but also to His desire and preference. Therefore, in the New Testament Mary was the unique one who touched the Lord's desire to the uttermost. For this reason she is set forth as an example for the followers of the Lord. We all should be like Mary in following the Lord and in serving Him.

In taking Mary as an example, we need to remember that originally she was rebellious. By the Man-Savior's compassion and mercy she was made a submissive one, one who loved the Lord and served Him not according to her opinion or by her effort, but according to His desire and preference. Here we see the way for us to be saved and the proper way for us to serve Him. [*Life Study of Luke msg 26*]

Enlightenment and inspiration:

DAY 4

1 Thessalonians 3:8

Because now we live if you stand firm in the Lord.

OUR HABIT OF BEING INDEPENDENT

The problem with doing all things in Him is not only a matter of intention, but also a matter of habit. We were born with a fallen nature, and we do not like to do things by others. This is even true of little children. The little ones may not want their mothers to feed them. They prefer to eat by themselves. They want to be free, liberated, and even wild. In this country the young people are anxious to be eighteen years of age, for then they can fly away from the cage of their family. To many, to be free means to be wild. This illustrates the fact that by nature not one of us likes to do things by others. Because we are used to going our own way, it is often troublesome to have Christ living in us.

When I preached the gospel more than forty-five years ago, I told people that we Christians had the most happy life. I asked the unbelievers to join us in this happy life. But later I no longer had the boldness to preach this way, for I learned that as a Christian my life is a life of troubles. I have Someone in me who is always giving me difficulty because He wants to do things differently from the way I would like to do them. Even if I should want to give up being a Christian, He would not let me go. Our problem is that we do not like to do things in Him.

The secret of the Christian life is that another One, Christ, lives in us. Christ is in us, and we must also be in Him. But we do not like to live in Him and with Him, nor do we like doing things by Him. By birth, we have the habit of being independent, and we all have our preferences. But every preference is a suffering, a loss, a failure, a defeat. The reason we do not have a victorious Christian life is that we are not faithful to live by Christ and to do things absolutely in Him.

[*The Experience of Christ*, p.93]

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATURE AND HABIT

Many elements of our character are often expressed unconsciously by our nature and habit. Character is constituted with thirty percent nature by birth and seventy percent habit formed by the daily life. Our character is expressed in many characteristics. These characteristics are built up with thirty percent of our nature and seventy percent of our habit. You may have been born a slow person. If you were under strict parents and teachers who would not allow you to be slow, but compelled you to be quick, it would change, to some extent, the slowness you received by birth. If, on the other hand, you were born slow and lived with parents who were also slow, then a habit of being slow would have been built up within you. The slowness you received by birth would be joined to a habit of slowness to form a character with this terrible characteristic. [*The Experience and Growth in Life*, ch 28]

THE LORD HAVING REGARD NOT FOR WHAT WE DO BUT FOR OUR DEPENDENCE ON HIM

We have seen that the self is the independent soul. In doing things, our motive, intention, aim, and goal may all be right, but if we are independent, we are in the self. This may be our situation even in preaching the gospel, for we may preach the gospel in the self and by the self. We may also do certain other works for the Lord, but we may do them in the self and by the self.

I am very grateful to the Lord for Matthew 16:21-26. Here Peter was not doing something evil to the Lord. On the contrary, he was acting out of love for Him and intended to do something good for Him. Nevertheless, because Peter was independent of the Lord, the Lord turned to Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan!" This indicates that no matter what we do, even if it is something very good, we are in the self whenever we are independent of the Lord.

From this we see that the Lord Jesus does not have regard for what we do; rather, He has regard for our dependence on Him. If we see this, we will pay attention not to what we do but to whether or not we are dependent on the Lord. We need to ask ourselves: Am I independent of the Lord or am I dependent on Him? If we are independent of the Lord, we are in the self. If we are dependent on the Lord, we are spontaneously dependent on the Body.

DEPENDENCE BRINGING GENUINE PEACE

Dependence brings peace. Actually, dependence is the real peace. How do we know that we are dependent on God? We know it by the genuine peace within us. When we are dependent on God, we are full of peace.

Some brothers who are independent of the Body may claim that they are doing something for God. However, they do not have peace within them. The more they claim that they are doing something for God, the more they have the sense that they are not at peace. But if you ask them if they have peace, they will say that they have peace. They may argue, saying, "I have peace. What need is there for me to be related to you people? I am preaching the gospel and doing the work of the Lord, and I have peace." What kind of peace is this? It is not the genuine peace; it is a self-made peace, a peace that is made and maintained by the self.

When we are dependent on the Lord and on the Body, there is no need for the self to manufacture a kind of peace and then strive to maintain this peace. A man-made peace is a peace which needs the self to sustain it. As soon as the self stops working at sustaining this kind of peace, the peace disappears. Genuine peace does not need to be sustained by the self. If you have a real dependence on the Lord and on the Body, automatically the peace will be there. You will know and others also will know that you are truly at peace. [*The Heavenly Vision*, ch 4]

Enlightenment and inspiration:

DAY 5

Luke 16:4-7, 9

4 I know what I will do so that when I am removed from the stewardship they may receive me into their own houses.

5 And when he had called to *him* each one of his master's debtors, he said to the first, How much do you owe my master?

6 And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.

7 Then to another he said, And you, how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, Take your bill and write eighty.

9 And I say to you, Make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

DOING ALL THINGS BY CHRIST AND IN CHRIST

If you love the Lord, you need to practice doing everything in Him. You need to check whether you are doing things by yourself or by Him. This is the way to gain Christ and to eat Him. To eat properly we should take in one bite at a time. This means that every day, from morning until evening, we should practice living by Christ in all things. We need to do everything with Him. We should be able to say, "From today onward, I shall quit doing things by myself. I do not want to live by myself any longer. From now on I shall live by Him and do everything in Him." If you do this, what a difference there will be in your daily living! [*The Experience of Christ*, p.94]

TO LIVE BEING CHRIST

The issue of practicing the secret of doing everything in Christ is that for us to live is Christ. Because we do all things in Christ, for us to live is Christ. The more we do things in Christ, the more we gain of Christ. This is a genuine, absolute enjoyment. However, not many Christians practice the secret of doing all things in Him. Rather, they like to attend meetings and hear messages. But the only way to live is to live by doing everything in Christ. This is the unique way to magnify Christ. In order to magnify Christ, we need to live by Christ and do everything in Christ. We can do all things in Him who empowers us. For example, as long as we are in the car, everything is all right, for the car with the driver can take us where we need to go. As we are riding along in the car, we can enjoy a pleasant time of sight-seeing. Learn to be quiet in Christ, He never makes a mistake. Sometimes, it may seem that He has made a mistake, but actually this is so that you may have a longer ride, enjoy more sight-seeing, and learn more lessons. The Christian life surely is a wonderful life.

As long as we do things in Christ, we shall experience Him, enjoy Him, and accumulate Him. This is the way to become rich in Christ and to have many rich experiences of Christ. If we all are rich in Christ, the meetings will be full of Christ. This is the Lord's recovery. For the recovery, we need to have a rich life in Christ to enrich all the meetings. This is the responsibility not only of the elders, but of all the

saints, even the youngest and newest ones. We all need to practice living by Christ and doing all things in Christ. This is the secret that we all need to learn today. [*The Experience of Christ*, p.95]

THE SECRET IS CHRIST

Paul had learned the secret of sufficiency, of satisfaction, of contentment; this secret is actually Christ Himself (vv. 11-12). In any environment and in any matter, Paul, who experienced Christ richly and abundantly, learned the secret to be content and to rejoice always (v. 4). According to the book of Philippians as a whole, the secret Paul learned was simply Christ; Paul took Christ as the secret to experience Christ, being content and rejoicing in any situation and in any matter because of Christ.

Paul had not only learned a secret; he had been initiated and had learned certain basic principles (v. 12). Paul had been initiated both into the proper Christian life and into the proper church life. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was initiated into Christ and into the Body of Christ (Acts 9:3-19, 25-28; 22:6-21; 13:1-4). He was initiated into the basic principles of Christ and the church. He learned the secret of how to take Christ as life (Col. 3:4), how to live Christ (Phil. 1:21a), how to magnify Christ (v. 20), how to gain Christ (3:8, 12), and how to have the church life (1:8, 19; 2:1-4, 19-20; 4:1-3).

When we are saved and come into the church, the Body of Christ, we need to be initiated by learning certain basic principles (1 Tim. 3:15-16). We are initiated in Christ, with Christ, and by Christ; because Christ is our secret, we know how to face any kind of situation. Because the church has a mysterious aspect, we need to be initiated by learning certain basic principles (Eph. 3:3, 9; 5:32). The secret of the Body is to take Christ as our life, to live Christ, to pursue Christ, to gain Christ, to magnify Christ, and to express Christ; these are the basic principles of the church, the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-5).

In everything refers to a particular time when we experience a certain thing of the Lord; in all things refers to a broad range of experiences over time (Phil. 4:12). Paul could say that both on a particular occasion and on all occasions, both at a certain time and throughout the course of his life, he had learned the secret. Paul experienced Christ moment by moment. He experienced Christ in particular things at particular times. He experienced Christ in all things and at all times.

[*Crystallization-Study Philippians msg 11*]

Enlightenment and inspiration:
