

HWMR: KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND ENJOYING CHRIST AS REVEALED IN PHILIPPIANS, (Week 1)

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

**TAKING CHRIST AS EVERYTHING TO
GAIN HIM BY DENYING OUR SELF AND
TURNING TO OUR SPIRIT**

Matthew 3:17	And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.
Matthew 12:18	“Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul has found delight. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will announce justice to the Gentiles.
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.
Mark 9:7	And a cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him!
Mark 9:8	And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but Jesus only with them.
2 Corinthians 2:10	But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;
Galatians 1:15	But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace,
Galatians 1:16	To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,
Colossians 2:16	Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath,
Colossians 2:17	Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.

Day 1

<i>Matthew 3:17</i>	<i>- And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.</i>
<i>Galatians 1:15-16</i>	<i>- But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,</i>

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

- A. God’s heart’s desire is that every person, every matter, and everything in the universe would **express Christ**; when everything is headed up in Christ, there will be absolute peace and harmony, and everything in the universe will express Christ—Col. 1:15-19; 3:10-11; Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15-16; Isa. 55:11-13.
- B. We **exist** for the expression of Christ, we **preach** the gospel for the expression of Christ, our **work** is for the expression of Christ, and the **church** is for the expression of Christ— 43:7; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:58; John 17:23; Eph. 1:23; 3:19-21.
- C. Christ is the **reality of every positive** thing in the universe—Col. 2:16-17:

1. The **entire universe** is a great painting drawn by God that **speaks** of Christ, **describes** Christ, and is for the **expression** of Christ—1:15-17; Psa. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20; Heb. 11:3.
2. **Daily** we eat and drink Christ, **weekly** we have completion and rest in Him, **monthly** we experience a new beginning in Him, and **throughout the year** He is our joy and enjoyment—Col. 2:16-18a.

Whenever we have such a **clear sky in our Christian life** and in our **church life**, we will also have the **throne**, which is above the clear sky. The throne is the center of the universe, and it is **where the Lord is**. We often talk about the Lord's presence, but we need to realize that the Lord's presence is always with the throne. Where the Lord is, there His throne is. His presence can never be separated from His throne. The Lord's throne is in the third heaven, but His throne is **also in our spirit**. Hence, the Lord's throne is with us **all the time**.

In our Christian life and in our church life, if the sky is clear, the throne will be there. But if our sky is **cloudy** and **darkened**, we will **not** see the throne. When we do not see the throne, we can be loose and do many things according to our taste and convenience. Today many believers are careless in their daily Christian life because they do not have a clear sky with the throne above it. Whenever believers are in darkness and thus are not under the throne, they can be quite loose, speaking what they want to speak, expressing what they want to express, and going where they want to go. But a person who is under the throne has no liberty to behave in such a way.

The throne is not only for God to reign over us but also for **God to accomplish His eternal purpose**. If we have a throne in our spiritual life, God will not only rule over us but will also fulfill His purpose in us, with us, and through us. Those who **do not** have the throne in their Christian life **will not** allow God to obtain His purpose with them. I hope that the Holy Spirit will deeply impress you with this matter. If you want God's purpose and plan to be carried out in you and with you, you must be a person who **submits to the throne**. You must be a person under the reign of God. Only then can God carry out His purpose in relation to you. (*Life-Study of Ezekiel, chapter 11*)

Day 2

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

2 Corinthians 3:17 - And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

- D. We must **see** and **realize** inwardly that God does not want anything other than Christ Himself; God's goal in His recovery is to **recover Christ as everything to us**—1 Cor. 1:9:
1. When Christ enters into us, He not only wants to be our life but also our everything; He is our **breath of life** (John 20:22), **water of life** (4:14; 7:37-39), **bread of life** (6:35, 48), **light of life** (1:4; 8:12), and **abode of life** (14:23; 15:1, 4-5).
 2. **We must walk worthily of the Lord** to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work by living Christ, growing Christ, expressing Christ, and propagating Christ in every respect—Col. 1:9-10.
 3. **We must allow God to work Christ into us** to such an extent that He is everything to us—our exceeding joy and our exceedingly great reward—Eph. 3:16-19; Psa. 43:4a; Gen. 15:1; John 15:11; Rom. 14:17; Phil. 3:14.
 4. The **greatest need** for us today is to see that Christ is the **Spirit indwelling our spirit**; if we do not see this point, everything of Christ will be merely an objective doctrine to us—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17—4:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; John 4:24.
 5. Christ is also the **Word**; when we **contact** the Lord's Word with our spirit, His words become spirit, and when His words become spirit, the Spirit enters into us so that we can be completely occupied by Him, transformed by Him, and mingled with Him to satisfy the desire of God's heart—Eph. 6:17-18; John 5:39-40; 6:63.

- E. When we have **seen** the all-inclusive Christ and have **learned** the secret of enjoying Him, we will be faithful to the Lord's recovery—Mark 9:7-8; Acts 26:19, 22; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9-10; 2:9-10; 2 Cor. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:9-18; Phil. 1:19-21a:
1. We should **concentrate on Him**, not on any persons, things, or matters other than Him; we should **focus on Him** as our unique center appointed by God so that all the problems among the believers may be solved—1 Cor. 1:9; Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:17b, 18b.
 2. For a person to leave the Lord's recovery means that he has **never seen what the recovery is**; whether or not we are secure in the recovery and protected from divisiveness depends on the vision we have seen; it is only by focusing on Christ that we can be saved from division.
 3. **If we care only for Christ** as our unique center, choice, preference, taste, and enjoyment, this will preserve us in the church in the Lord's recovery until He comes back; otherwise, we will be disappointed or distracted and forsake the Lord's recovery.

Day 3

Philippians 3:13-14 - 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.

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

- A. "For to me, to live is Christ"—Paul took Christ as his **living**—1:21a.
- B. "As always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death"—Paul took Christ as his **expression**—v. 20.
- C. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"—Paul took the mind of Christ as **his mind**—2:5.
- D. "And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith"—Paul took Christ as his **lived-out righteousness**—3:9.
- E. "On account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ"—Paul considered the **knowledge of Christ to be supereminent**—v. 8.
- F. "One thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward"—Paul took Christ as his **goal**—vv. 13-14.
- G. "Brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things"—Paul took Christ as his **virtues**—4:8.
- H. "I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me"—Paul took Christ as his power to **live out Christ as his magnificent living**—v. 13.
- I. "I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack"—Paul took Christ as his **secret**—vv. 11-12; cf. vv. 4-7.
- J. "Our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself"—Paul took Christ as his **expectation**—3:20-21.

In verses 13 and 14 Paul goes on to say, “*Brothers, I do not yet reckon myself to have laid hold, but one thing—forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*” Even though Paul had experienced and gained Christ tremendously, he **did not** consider that he had experienced Him **in full** or gained Him to the **uttermost**. For this reason he was **still** advancing toward the goal—the **gaining** of Christ to the fullest extent.

Paul was pursuing toward the goal for the prize. **Christ** is both the **goal** and the **prize**. The goal is the fullest enjoyment and gain of Christ, and the prize is the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom as a reward to the victorious runners of the New Testament race. In order to reach the goal for the prize, Paul was exercised to **forget the things which are behind** and to **stretch forward to the things which are before**. This is the way to gain Christ by pursuing Him.

Even though Paul was a matured saint and a very experienced apostle, he tells us that he had not already obtained and had not yet been perfected. He did not regard himself as one who had obtained the full enjoyment of Christ or the full maturity in life. He, of course, had obtained the common salvation by the common faith, but he was still pursuing Christ in order to gain Him. Furthermore, Paul was also seeking Christ in order to have the **extra portion** of resurrection. In order to have this portion of resurrection, called the out-resurrection, we must **pursue, run the race, and finish our course triumphantly**.

Like Paul, we have been regenerated, but we are **not yet perfected**, or matured, in life. At the time of our conversion, we were gained by Christ so that we may gain Him. Now as those who have not yet obtained and who have not yet been perfected, we are **pursuing Christ**. (Life-Study of Philippians, chapter 23)

Day 4

Philippians 3:8 - But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

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.

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

- A. **Gaining Christ** causes us to have a sense of God’s presence (the pneumatic Christ)— John 20:22; Exo. 33:11a, 14:
 1. We should be afraid of only one thing—that we would **lose the presence of our Lord**— 2 Cor. 2:10; cf. Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19.
 2. “He will enliven us after two days; / On the third day He will raise us up, / And we will live in His presence” (Hosea 6:2)—the reality of the third day is the person, the presence, of the resurrected Christ with the reality of revival (Hab. 3:2).
- B. Gaining Christ causes us to feel **bright** and **clear** inwardly—Rev. 22:1; John 1:4; 8:12; Ezek. 1:22, 26.
- C. Gaining Christ causes us to feel **inwardly supplied** with Christ as our spiritual food and spiritual drink—1 Cor. 10:3-4; John 6:57; 4:10, 14, 24; 1 Cor. 12:3b, 13.
- D. Gaining Christ causes us to **grow in life** and be **transformed** into His image—Col. 2:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2.
- E. Gaining Christ causes us to have **vitality** and to **take action**—Dan. 11:32b; Acts 1:8; 5:20; 13:1-4; 1 Cor. 14:31; cf. Ezek. 3:1-3; Psa. 68:11-13, 19.

Christ is our life and life supply for the purpose that we might **express God**. God cannot be expressed through man in an objective way. If He would remain in heaven and not get into us and be wrought into our being, He could not be expressed through us. God had to find a way to enter into us and to be wrought into us so that our being would express not ourselves but God. Therefore, the objective God, the God far away from us, has become the **subjective God in our very being**. He is not only within us but is being **wrought into us**. Therefore, the apostle Paul could say, “To me, to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21). Paul did not say, “To me, to live is Saul of Tarsus, a learned Jew.” He said, “To me, to live is Christ,” because the very God in Christ had been received by Paul and wrought into his being. Paul did not express himself, but Christ who had been wrought into him. This is God’s purpose, and it is the reason He created us with a spirit and a soul.

According to the Bible, our soul is our being, our character, our person. As persons, we are not intended by God to express ourselves. Rather, **God intends that we express Him**. In our daily life and in our behavior we should not express ourselves but God. In order to express God, we first need to **exercise our spirit** and take Him into us. Then we need to live the kind of life in our being, person, and character that expresses Him. Then people will say, “This person does not express the American way of life; he expresses God.” For us to receive God, we need a **spirit**; and for us to live Him out and express Him, we need a personality, which is our **soul**.

We have seen that we have a spirit to receive God and a soul to live out God. Perhaps you are wondering what the function of our body is. Without a body we would be a phantom. As human beings, we need a tangible physical body. Having such a body, we are normal. Therefore, **God created us with a spirit to take Him in, a soul to express Him, and a body to contain ourselves in a normal way**. For His purpose, God had to create us with these three parts. (*The Exercise of the Kingdom for the Building of the Church, chapter 6*)

Day 5

2 Timothy 4:22 - *The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.*

Romans 8:6 - *For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.*

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

- A. We must **enter into our spirit completely** because the Lord as the Spirit, the reality of the Body, is in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.
- B. We must learn how **to set our mind on the spirit**; in other words, we must learn how to **trust** in God and depend on the Lord; the real secret of living the Christian life for the church life is for us to set our mind on the spirit—Rom. 8:6.
- C. Turning to the spirit is the secret of being a Christian; the way to follow the Lord, enjoy the Lord’s riches, live in the reality of the Body of Christ, and function in the New Testament ministry is to **continually exercise to reject** our self, **lose** our soul-life, and **turn** to our spirit—2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 16—4:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 8:16.
- D. The work of the Lord, which we carry out by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a work that begins with the spirit and ends with the spirit; this work begins from **our spirit** and ends in **others’ spirits**—1 Cor. 2:4-5, 13, 15; 2 Cor. 3:6; 13:3; cf. Ps. 42:7a.
- E. We have a **spirit** to contact and receive God and a **soul** to live out and express God; taking in God, living out God, and expressing God should be our joy, amusement, and entertainment—John 4:10, 14, 24; 6:57; Luke 1:46-47; 1 Cor. 10:31.
- F. The soul was created by God for the **purpose of expressing Him**, not to have its own enjoyment or preferences; in God’s economy there is no selfish enjoyment; Paul’s ministry was to dispense the riches of Christ as grace to the believers for their enjoyment—Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Eph. 3:2.
- G. To **deny our self** means to reject the soul’s desire, preference, and choice; man’s first sin was to do something for himself, to satisfy the self—Gen. 3:1-7.

Day 6

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.

Romans 10:13 - For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

- H. **Anything** that comes out of our self (the mind, emotion, and will of our fallen soul) is **connected** to Satan and to demons—Matt. 16:21-27:
1. As the unchaste wife of Jehovah, Israel became evil; we need to **realize** that once we forsake God, we too can do any kind of evil—Hosea 4:1; Eph. 4:17-21.
 2. We must **realize** that if we **do not remain** in fellowship with God in our spirit, we **lose** God's presence and are capable of being in the flesh and of behaving like the worldly people—Phil. 2:1-2; 1 John 1:3; Eph. 4:17-19; Gen. 20; cf. 12:11-13; 13:18.
 3. We cannot afford to take a vacation from our **fellowship** with God in our spirit; our protection is not our self; it is **God's presence**—1 John 1:3; cf. Ps. 31:20.
- I. **Prayer** is the real denial of the self:
1. Actually, we do not need to pray in a lengthy way; it is **sufficient** simply to call "O Lord Jesus"; even such a short prayer means "no longer I but Christ"—Rom. 10:12-13; Gal. 2:20.
 2. Our prayer testifies that we do not exercise our self-effort to deal with the situation (to "cast out demons"); instead, we **apply Christ**—Mark 9:14-29.
 3. To pray is to **practice the vision concerning Christ with His death and resurrection** being our replacement so that we may be fully "Christified" to satisfy the desire of God's heart—vv. 2-13.

As we have seen, Matthew 16 speaks about the building up of the church and also about the gates of Hades and the keys of the kingdom. Without the keys to lock the gates, the church cannot be built. Because there has been so little exercise of these keys, the church has not yet been built. We may talk a great deal about the building. However, when certain things take place to touch us, the **self is open**. Because we are open to Hades, something from Hades—Satan—comes out. How we need to use the key of **self-denial to lock the self**! The way to keep from being offended by others is to **lock up yourself by denying yourself**. Blessed are those who are not offended.

Matthew 16 has been veiled for centuries. Perhaps you have read this chapter again and again and again without knowing what the Lord was really saying. But now the Lord has given us further understanding to see how the church can be built up through the exercise of the keys. **We need to be afraid of ourselves and use the key to lock up ourselves**. We should do this not only in the church life but also in our family life. If you **exercise the key to lock up the self**, you will have no problems in your marriage. All the problems are from Satan who comes out through the gate of the self. When this gate is locked, Satan is confined, and there are no problems.

In these chapters I am not concerned with mere doctrine. Instead, I am presenting to you what I have learned through years of suffering. We need to find out how the church can be built up. If you say that the church is built up through the cross and the resurrection, that is still too doctrinal. **We need to go on to learn** to exercise the key of self-denial to lock up the self in every situation. Whether a situation is for you or against you, you must lock up the self. Whether the brothers love you and welcome you or hate you and do not welcome you, you still need to lock up your self. If you do this, **there will be no problems**, and it will be possible to have the building of the church. But without the locking up of the self, there is no possibility of having the building. (*The Exercise of the Kingdom for the Building of the Church, chapter 3*)