

THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST

Being Found in Christ, Knowing Christ, and Pursuing Christ (Message 6)

Scripture Reading: [Phil. 3:9-14](#)

- I. Paul's desire was to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness but "that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith"—[Phil. 3:9](#):
 - A. Deep within Paul was the aspiration to have his whole being immersed in and saturated with Christ so that all who observed him might find him fully in Christ; we also should have the earnest desire to be found in Christ—[v. 9a](#).
 - B. Paul wanted to be found in Christ in the condition of not having his own righteousness but the righteousness of God, taking Christ as his subjective, lived-out righteousness—[v. 9](#):
 1. There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness to the believers:
 - a. The first aspect is Christ being the believers' righteousness for them to be justified by God objectively—[Rom. 3:24-26](#); [Acts 13:39](#); [Gal. 3:24b](#).
 - b. The second aspect is Christ being the believers' righteousness lived out of them as the manifestation of God, who is the righteousness in Christ given to the believers for them to be justified subjectively—[Rom. 4:25](#); [1 Pet. 2:24a](#); [James 2:24](#); [Matt. 5:20](#); [Rev. 19:8](#).
 2. The subjective righteousness of God in [Philippians 3:9](#) is actually God Himself becoming our daily living, a living that is right with God and man:
 - a. Paul did not want to live in his own righteousness, the righteousness that comes from man's own effort to keep the law—[vv. 6, 9](#).
 - b. Paul desired to live in the righteousness of God and to be found in the condition of expressing God by living [[128](#)] Christ; if we would be found in Christ, we must be in such a condition—[1:20-21a](#).

- C. Faith is the basis, the condition, on which we receive and possess the righteousness that is out of God, which is Christ—3:9; 1 Cor. 1:30.
- II. Paul lived in a condition of having not his own righteousness but the righteousness that is out of God in order to know (experience) Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, to be conformed to His death, and to attain to the out-resurrection—Phil. 3:10-11:
 - A. To have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ (v. 8) is by revelation, but to know Christ (v. 10) is by experience—to have an experiential knowledge of Him:
 - 1. To experience Christ is to know and enjoy Christ in an experiential way—2:17-18; 4:4, 10.
 - 2. To know Christ is not merely to have the knowledge of Him but to gain His person—2 Cor. 2:10.
 - 3. To gain Christ is to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His unsearchable riches by paying a price—Phil. 3:8; Eph. 3:8.
 - 4. We need to know Christ by experiencing Him, enjoying Him, being one with Him, and having Him live within us; in this way we know Him by both revelation and experience—Phil. 3:10; 1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 2:20.
 - B. Paul aspired to know the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings—Phil. 3:10:
 - 1. The power of Christ's resurrection is His resurrection life, which raised Him from the dead—Eph. 1:19-20:
 - a. The Spirit is the reality of Christ's resurrection and its power—Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 1 John 5:6.
 - b. The Spirit compounded with Christ's resurrection and its power indwells our spirit to dispense Christ's resurrection and its power into our entire being—Phil. 1:19; Exo. 30:23-25; Rom. 8:6b, 10-11.
 - c. If we put ourselves aside and remain under the death of the cross, we will experience the power of Christ's resurrection, and spontaneously, the power of resurrection experienced by us will build up the Body—Phil. 3:10; Eph. 4:12, 16. [129]
 - 2. The expression *the fellowship of His sufferings* in Philippians 3:10 refers to the participation in Christ's sufferings, a necessary condition for the experience of the power of His resurrection—Matt. 20:22-23; Col. 1:24:

- a. We first experience the power of Christ’s resurrection, and then by this power we are enabled to participate in His sufferings—[Phil. 3:10](#).
 - b. These sufferings are mainly for Christ’s Body, the church—[Col. 1:24](#).
- C. [Philippians 3:10](#) also speaks of “being conformed to His death”; this indicates that Paul desired to take Christ’s death as the mold of his life:
 - 1. Being conformed to Christ’s death is the base of the experience of Christ—[1:20-21a](#); [3:9-10](#).
 - 2. The mold of Christ’s death refers to Christ’s continually putting to death His natural life so that He might live by the life of God—[John 6:57a](#).
 - 3. By being conformed to Christ’s death, we experience Christ in His death for the release, impartation, and multiplication of life, and we also glorify the Father—[12:24-26](#), [28](#); [13:31](#); [2 Cor. 4:12](#).
- D. The result of being conformed to Christ’s death is that we attain to the out-resurrection from the dead, which will be a prize to the overcomers—[Phil. 3:11](#):
 - 1. To attain to, to arrive at, the out-resurrection means that our entire being is gradually and continually resurrected—[1 Thes. 5:23](#).
 - 2. The out-resurrection is a resurrection out of the old creation into the new creation—[2 Cor. 5:17](#); [Gal. 6:15](#).
- III. Like Paul, we should pursue Christ Himself and “pursue toward the goal for the prize”—[Phil. 3:12](#), [14a](#):
 - A. In order to pursue Christ, we should not think that we have attained, and we should forget the things which are behind and stretch “forward to the things which are before”—[vv. 12-13](#).
 - B. The goal toward which we are pursuing is the full enjoyment and gaining 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—[v. 14](#); [1 Cor. 9:24](#); [Heb. 10:35](#); [11:26](#); [12:1-2](#).

MESSAGE SIX

BEING FOUND IN CHRIST, KNOWING CHRIST, AND PURSUING CHRIST

In this concluding message we enter into the depths, the heart, and the core of Paul's burden in writing this Epistle to the Philippians. [Philippians 3:9-14](#) says,

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, to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead. 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. 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.

We should read these verses not only in His presence but with a seeking spirit and an open heart, and we need to be opened to be enlightened, supplied, instructed, exposed, convicted, and encouraged by the wonderful Word, which is spirit and life.

The title of this message is "Being Found in Christ, Knowing Christ, and Pursuing Christ." This outline is an extract of Brother Lee's marvelous, vast, deep, and rich ministry on every point in these verses. I am not overstating when I say that it would require at least fifty messages to properly cover what is in this outline, but I believe we had the Spirit's leading to present this extract, so you can have a full view to see the whole.

BEING LIKE-SOULED

Before we consider the outline, I have the burden and the responsibility to speak concerning two matters. These two matters will determine to what extent we actually experience Christ. In these matters there is an ^[131] exceedingly precious portion that Paul shares with us, something that I consider to be one of the saddest utterances in all his Epistles. In [Philippians 2:19-20](#) Paul says,

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged by knowing the things concerning you. For I have no one like-souled who will genuinely care for what concerns you.

Paul had a number of co-workers, yet in effect he said, “I will send Timothy. He will genuinely care for what concerns you. I know this because he is like-souled with me. When you hear him, you hear me. When you see him, you see me. When he expresses a view, he is expressing my view. I have no one else like-souled.” Here in a fresh way is an example of why I treasure the Recovery Version—its accuracy. The Greek word in [verse 20](#) literally means “like-souled”; thus, the Recovery Version faithfully and accurately renders the word “like-souled.” The New International Version translates the same phrase as “I have no one like him.” That is the issue of scholars working in darkness. This term *like-souled* is a window that opens up something. By his disposition Timothy was very different from Paul. We can see this by studying Paul’s speaking to him in his Epistles. As a spiritual child of Paul, he became like-souled, that is, the same soul, as Paul. According to [1 Timothy 1:16](#), Paul was presented, through God’s mercy, as a pattern to all who will believe. This is how a God-man lives, pursues Christ, prays, passes through sufferings, and ministers. In [Philippians](#) we see how a God-man experiences and enjoys Christ. Paul’s soul had been fully gained by the indwelling, all-inclusive Christ, and Timothy was open to the Spirit and to Paul’s perfecting so that he would allow his mind, view, opinion, thought, reasons, thinking, emotion, feeling, intention, and motives to match the apostle Paul. Paul knew this, which is why he could utter two matters. The first matter is seen in [1 Corinthians 4:17](#), which says, “Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.” Then, just before he was martyred, Paul wrote to Timothy with much feeling. He was speaking in the midst of a tide of degradation, but in [2 Timothy 3](#) Paul says, “You have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings, such as befell me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra” (vv. 10-11).

Paul had been brought into a condition by the Lord to have unlimited experience and enjoyment of Christ. In his being, there was no frustration [132] or limitation. To what extent have we been learning to be like-souled with the faithful elders in our church and with the ministry of the word? Part of my heart is aching for dear brothers and sisters on the earth who are

almost elderly now. They do not realize that in the last twenty years their disposition, peculiarity, and self have been increasing and that their thinking and their views are quite contrary to what we see in the minister and in the ministry of the age.

Paul realized that Timothy was in a position of being like-souled with him so that Timothy could have an unhindered experience of Christ. Brother Nee, along with Brother Lee, knew who among the co-workers in China were like-souled with Brother Nee. Brother Lee also knew by his discernment who were like-souled and where they were. The Lord's move to the Russian-speaking world was under tremendous blessing because the ones whom Brother Lee sent there were like-souled with him. The Lord will enlighten us concerning what it means for us to be like-souled and how we should live this out. May the Lord cover me to bear a testimony of a learner. I am not boasting but merely testifying of the fact. When I began to work on the Life-studies for and with Brother Lee in 1974, I set aside some time to pray. I remember a mysterious word Brother Lee spoke in Elden hall in the late 1960s about serving God in our spirit. He said that we need to learn to serve in another's spirit. At that point I had been in the recovery for only eight years; nevertheless, I had this responsibility, and the Lord caused me to pray, "Lord, this is not my ministry. These are not my messages. Lord, I will enter into Brother Lee's spirit, his heart, his thought, his feeling, his burden, his utterance, and his emphasis." I can testify that I am still learning.

This is a crucial matter. There are saints, localities, and even whole countries held back from the experience of Christ because they are under brothers who are far from being like-souled the way Timothy was with Paul. That is an awesome responsibility. However, the Lord is speaking this to us to open His heart to us and to give us a way to go on. We all, especially those bearing responsibility, need to present our inward parts to the Lord and pray desperately, saying, "Lord, here I am. I open my whole being to You. Adjust me. Do whatever You need to do. Bring me into this oneness not just for my advance but for the advance of Your recovery."

SEEKING OUR OWN THINGS RATHER THAN THE THINGS OF CHRIST

[Philippians 2:21](#) says, "All seek their own things, not the things of [133] Christ Jesus." Here *their own things* means focusing on our personal affairs. It is one thing to care about our health; it is another thing to be obsessed with it. It is one thing to provide for our family and our children;

it is another matter to idolize them. In affluent countries like the United States, one of the greatest hindrances for decades among the saints has been their seeking their own things. This is why opposition to young brothers or sisters coming to the full-time training comes primarily from their parents who are in the church life, who want their son or daughter to take care of their own things, including their career, advanced education, and marriage. These parents might tell their children to be practical and be balanced. Those who seek their own things cannot be like-souled with those who seek first the kingdom of God, who seek first to do the will of God, and who pursue first what is in the heart of the Lord. The experience of Christ of those who seek their own things will be drastically limited, and the limitation will only increase. Because of this, they cannot genuinely care for the things of Christ Jesus. The things of Christ Jesus are the things concerning the church with all the saints (v. 21, footnote 1). Throughout the Lord's recovery, we need brothers and sisters who forget position, who have no ambition, and who have no rivalry. They only genuinely care for what concerns the churches and the saints, because their experience of Christ is unlimited, because they are one-souled with more experienced ones who genuinely care for the things of Christ Jesus.

We need to come to the Lord as we are and where we are. We should not respond to this word by giving the Lord what we think is a consecration. We may outwardly say, "I consecrate to pursue the Lord. I consecrate to leave everything behind"; however, that is not a consecration but simply a promise or even a vow, which eventually we will not keep. Consecration is actually our declaring, "I give myself to God who possesses me. I agree with Him. He can do whatever He wants. Work in me. Work on me. Give me the experiences I need. Lord, I give You the right to direct my steps for my whole life." Some may come in this way and say, "Lord, I do not know where I am. I do not know what to do. But I will respond to You by opening my being as never before. Lord, bring me into the essence of every verse in Philippians. Make me like-souled with the apostle, with the minister of the age, and with those who are like-souled with them. Lord, train me to seek first the kingdom of God and to care for my human responsibilities but not to seek my own things. Lord, train me as a parent not to give a dual message of being for Christ and the church and also for my children's careers. Train me to give one message: We exist. We have [134] been saved. We are in the church to carry out God's eternal purpose. We are here to do the will of our heavenly Father, and we want everything—including every decision we make, what we study, the job we take, where we live, whom we marry—in our human life to support this."

This needs to be settled between us and the Lord. Only then will He have a way.

**PAUL'S DESIRE BEING TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST,
NOT HAVING HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS
BUT "THAT WHICH IS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST,
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OUT OF GOD
AND BASED ON FAITH"**

Paul's desire was to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness but "that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith" (Phil. 3:9). Paul wanted to be found in Christ by anyone who would cross his path. He was aware that he was being observed not just by human beings but also by spiritual agents. They know where we are. Paul wanted to be found in Christ in any kind of environment so that he would not be put to shame. However, there was a condition that he had to fulfill, that is, to not have his own righteousness. He had to lose the self-made righteousness that he was exhibiting in his living. He had to stop doing what he thought was right.

**Deep within Paul Being the Aspiration
to Have His Whole Being Immersed in
and Saturated with Christ
So That All Who Observed Him
Might Find Him Fully in Christ;
Our Also Needing to Have the Earnest Desire
to Be Found in Christ**

Deep within Paul was the aspiration to have his whole being immersed in and saturated with Christ so that all who observed him might find him fully in Christ; we also should have the earnest desire to be found in Christ (v. 9a). Suppose after an evening meeting in our locality, we go to the grocery store, looking at this or that, and another saint comes by. It is quite delightful. Although we have been in a meeting together for two hours, we are happy to see one another after the meeting. However, if we are not found in Christ, we will feel uneasy. We do not know when we will see someone or who we will see. If we are exercised to be found in Christ, when we see someone, they will realize that we are in the Lord. This means that we are experiencing the secret in 4:12. Paul [135] wanted to be found in

Christ, so he wanted his whole being immersed in and saturated with Christ.

**Paul Wanting to Be Found in Christ
in the Condition of Not Having His Own Righteousness
but the Righteousness of God,
Taking Christ as His Subjective, Lived-out Righteousness**

*There Being Two Aspects of Christ
Being Righteousness to the Believers*

Paul wanted to be found in Christ in the condition of not having his own righteousness but the righteousness of God, taking Christ as his subjective, lived-out righteousness (3:9). There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness to the believers. Most Christians know only the first aspect. I am thankful they know the objective righteousness, which is Christ as righteousness attributed to us so that God may justify us. There is a second aspect of righteousness—the subjective righteousness.

*The First Aspect Being Christ
Being the Believers' Righteousness
for Them to Be Justified by God Objectively*

The first aspect is Christ being the believers' righteousness for them to be justified by God objectively (Rom. 3:24-26; Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:24b). We all are clothed with a robe of righteousness (Luke 15:22). We can come before God the Father in faith and in peace because we have been justified by Christ as our righteousness.

*The Second Aspect Being Christ
Being the Believers' Righteousness Lived out of Them
as the Manifestation of God, Who Is the Righteousness in Christ
Given to the Believers for Them to Be Justified Subjectively*

The second aspect is Christ being the believers' righteousness lived out of them as the manifestation of God, who is the righteousness in Christ given to the believers for them to be justified subjectively (Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24a; James 2:24; Matt. 5:20; Rev. 19:8). If we have subjective

righteousness, God can approve our inner being and our living because our living manifests the Christ who dwells in us as the Spirit. [Revelation 19:8](#) says, “It was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.” Whoever longs to be part of the bride and aspires to be in the wedding [136] feast of the kingdom should be actively preparing her wedding garment, which is the righteousnesses of the saints. The righteousnesses signify innumerable acts of living out Christ in particular situations. We are one spirit with Him. We take Him as our person. We allow Him to live. We express Him through our soul. This expression is bright, radiant righteousness. This is what Paul longed to have.

***The Subjective Righteousness of God in Philippians 3:9
Being Actually God Himself Becoming Our Daily Living,
a Living That Is Right with God and Man***

The subjective righteousness of God in [Philippians 3:9](#) is actually God Himself becoming our daily living, a living that is right with God and man. If we do not have access to the lounge on the eighth floor in this hotel, but someone opens the door to let us in and we go in to get something, we are unrighteous with the hotel; we are unrighteous both with God and man. There are so many things that encompass our daily living, yet having Christ as our subjective righteousness does not involve any self-effort. Having subjective righteousness is living Christ and expressing Him in exact, particular situations.

***Paul Not Wanting to Live in His Own Righteousness,
the Righteousness That Comes from Man’s Own Effort
to Keep the Law***

Paul did not want to live in his own righteousness, the righteousness that comes from man’s own effort to keep the law ([vv. 6, 9](#)). When people argue or when nations go to war, their concept is that they are right and that others are wrong; no people argue to prove that they are wrong. But all the fighting ends when everyone involved realizes that all are wrong and that they all must repent. Let us allow Christ to come into and live in our situation and to be our righteousness.

Paul tried very hard to keep the law. Then he saw Christ, and he counted all things as loss and suffered the loss of all things. Then he said, in effect,

“What a waste of time it is to try to be righteous. Christ, You are my righteousness. Live in me. Live out of me. Be my righteousness everywhere all the time. Shine out of me wherever I am.” Only God knows what kind of expression was there when they killed him. We do not know how Paul died. Nero would crucify some and then set them on fire. But Paul, like Peter, glorified God to the end. In [Philippians 1:20](#) he says, “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, [137] but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.” This was his longing.

*Paul Desiring to Live in the Righteousness of God and
to Be Found in the Condition of Expressing God by Living Christ;
If We Would Be Found in Christ,
Our Having to Be in Such a Condition*

Paul desired to live in the righteousness of God and to be found in the condition of expressing God by living Christ; if we would be found in Christ, we must be in such a condition ([1:20-21a](#)). On the one hand, more Christ will be added to us. On the other hand, we need our own journey that is similar to that in the book of Job. All our self-made righteousness must be broken, terminated, until we have none. The cross reduces everything to nothing. By the end of the book, Job said, “I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You; / Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes” ([42:5-6](#)). In other words, Job was saying, “I had a doctrinal knowledge of You. Now I see You; therefore, I abhor myself. All that I expressed was just myself, my self-righteousness.” We may regard ourselves as good, ethical, moral, and “spiritual,” but we must be willing to experience the discipline of the Spirit to the extent that the Lord deals with our own kind of righteousness. He has a wise way to do it, by which we experience a great release and we are really delivered from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and our mind is no longer governed by right and wrong, good or evil. There is only one tree—the tree of life. The axe has been laid to the root of the other tree, and the tree of life bears the fruit of righteousness. We need to pray, “Lord, I choose this. Do what You need to do. Gain ground every day. I am willing to lose and count as refuse my self-made righteousness.”

Faith Being the Basis, the Condition,

**on Which We Receive and Possess the Righteousness
That Is out of God, Which Is Christ**

Faith is the basis, the condition, on which we receive and possess the righteousness that is out of God, which is Christ ([Phil. 3:9](#); [1 Cor. 1:30](#)). This faith is not our own but faith that has been infused into us. We must come to the realization that we cannot be it, make it, bear it, or do it. I agree with the Lord's word. If we read a verse such as [Matthew 5:48](#), which says, "You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," we need to say, "Amen, this is Your word. I will stop trying." Then the Lord [138] may say, "I have been waiting for you to give up. Now let Me live and just let Me flow, and you will be happy and peaceful." This is faith.

**PAUL LIVING IN A CONDITION
OF HAVING NOT HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS
BUT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT IS OUT OF GOD
IN ORDER TO KNOW (EXPERIENCE) CHRIST
AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION
AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS,
TO BE CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH,
AND TO ATTAIN TO THE OUT-RESURRECTION**

Paul lived in a condition of having not his own righteousness but the righteousness that is out of God in order to know (experience) Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, to be conformed to His death, and to attain to the out-resurrection ([Phil. 3:10-11](#)). This is an extract of knowing Christ, knowing the power of His resurrection, knowing the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, and attaining to the out-resurrection. In this message we can present only the crystal, the main thought. The Lord will fill in the details in our personal seeking and study.

**To Have the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ
Being by Revelation,
but to Know Christ Being by Experience—
to Have an Experiential Knowledge of Him**

To have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ ([v. 8](#)) is by

revelation, but to know Christ (v. 10) is by experience—to have an experiential knowledge of Him. According to one definition, *experience* is “direct, personal participation.” For example, the book of Hebrews reveals that Christ is the divine and kingly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. I believe some can testify that they know by experience Christ as the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek through certain situations in the past. They may say, “He came to me with bread and wine, with the processed God, ministering Himself into me.” In other words, they had a direct, personal participation. We need to know Christ as the Shepherd of our soul. We need to have the knowledge of this and then the experience through which we can testify, “I have had direct, personal participation in the Lord’s shepherding of my soul.” We do not even have to tell our entire life story; the Body knows that Christ as the Shepherd of our soul is real to us. Others may testify, “In Matthew the Lord said that all authority in [139] heaven and on earth has been given to the Son of Man. I know Christ with His authority. He encountered me. He shattered me. He humbled me. But it was a blessing. I had a direct, personal participation in this.” This is experience.

When we have time at the end of a message for the saints to speak, it would be good if only those who can exercise to confirm the message would come forward. Often the dear young ones flock to the microphone to read a point or sing a song. Their speaking is very sweet but lacks the substance of the older saints who have more experience. We treasure the younger saints, but they need to know what it is to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling and to know when to be quiet and open their being to receive supply from older, experienced members of the Body. The older saints should exercise to not remain silent. We all are learning. It is not false humility, but I can follow Paul to say that I am nowhere close to having arrived. I have not obtained. But I can testify to you that I am not just seeking or searching but pressing forward. I am pursuing with all that is in me. I must gain Him. He must be real to me. I must know what resurrection is. I must know Him. Today must not be a day of waste but a day of gain, a day of pursuing. Knowing Christ is to know Him by direct, personal participation. It is like a couple in a courtship. They get to know each other sufficiently, so they are clear that their being together is from the Lord. But it is when they actually come together and are one that they will have direct, personal participation in married life. Then they will be able to share, “We are experiencing married life.”

***To Experience Christ Being to Know and Enjoy Christ
in an Experiential Way***

To experience Christ is to know and enjoy Christ in an experiential way (2:17-18; 4:4, 10).

***To Know Christ Being Not Merely
to Have the Knowledge of Him but to Gain His Person***

To know Christ is not merely to have the knowledge of Him but to gain His person (2 Cor. 2:10). Surely, to gain His person includes His living in us, making His home in us, replacing us, and becoming us.

***To Gain Christ Being to Experience, Enjoy, and Take Possession
of All His Unsearchable Riches by Paying a Price***

To gain Christ is to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His [140] unsearchable riches by paying a price (Phil. 3:8; Eph. 3:8). *Hymns*, #542 is a wonderful hymn. The chorus says,

Oh, the riches, Oh, the riches,
Christ my Savior has for me!
How unsearchable their measure,
Yet my full reality!

In any given Lord's table meeting that you remember, how much praise to the Lord and how much worship to the Father had the content of specific riches of Christ that have been a reality in your being? Can you worship the Father with the experienced riches of Christ? Instead of worshipping the Father with the riches of Christ in our experience, many read the lines of the hymn. That is still better than nothing. However, it has been seventy years since Brother Lee began fighting for the recovery of genuine worship. We have the doctrine, the teaching, and the vocabulary. True worship comes out of the real experiences of Christ and by the release of our spirit. We may be surprised at what flows out, because we know what we have gone through. We can only go on because God is merciful. He has melted our heart with His tender mercy. We thought He was angry, but actually that was a lie from the enemy. We thought He would judge us, but

He did not come to judge us. Instead, He said, “I understand you. I love you. You need mercy from Me.” When we worship the Father and worship Him with Christ who has been mercy to us, the Father knows. This is truthfulness. This is reality. How much longer must our Father wait? The Father seeks such persons to worship Him.

***Needing to Know Christ by Experiencing Him, Enjoying Him,
Being One with Him, and Having Him Live within Us;
in This Way Our Knowing Him
by Both Revelation and Experience***

We need to know Christ by experiencing Him, enjoying Him, being one with Him, and having Him live within us; in this way we know Him by both revelation and experience ([Phil. 3:10](#); [1 Cor. 6:17](#); [Gal. 2:20](#)).

**Paul Aspiring to Know the Power of Christ’s Resurrection
and the Fellowship of His Sufferings**

***The Power of Christ’s Resurrection Being
His Resurrection Life, Which Raised Him from the Dead***

Paul aspired to know the power of Christ’s resurrection and the ^[141] fellowship of His sufferings ([Phil. 3:10](#)). The power of Christ’s resurrection is His resurrection life, which raised Him from the dead ([Eph. 1:19-20](#)). He wanted to know and specifically prayed for the power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. We need specific prayers: “Lord, I want to know the power of Your resurrection. Make this real to me.” The blessed “church kids” are more blessed than they may realize, but they desperately need to touch reality. They should pray, “Lord, make this real to me. My parents paid the price to be here. I was born here. I did not ask to be here, but I am here. Lord, make this real to me. Make the enjoyment, love, grace, and resurrection power real to me.” If we all pray in this way, the Lord will give us light, and He will give us situations that will enable us to firsthand, directly, and personally know resurrection power. We will know that death cannot defeat the resurrection life. Nothing can defeat it. Death could not defeat the Lord. Death will never defeat the Lord’s recovery or the Body of Christ. Seemingly death wins when someone goes to the Lord. However, that is only in outward appearance. Resurrection life prevails. Resurrection power is the highest

power in the universe.

*The Spirit Being the Reality
of Christ's Resurrection and Its Power*

The Spirit is the reality of Christ's resurrection and its power ([Rom. 8:9-11](#); [1 Cor. 15:45b](#); [1 John 5:6](#)).

*The Spirit Compounded with Christ's Resurrection and Its Power
Indwelling Our Spirit to Dispense Christ's Resurrection
and Its Power into Our Entire Being*

The Spirit compounded with Christ's resurrection and its power indwells our spirit to dispense Christ's resurrection and its power into our entire being ([Phil. 1:19](#); [Exo. 30:23-25](#); [Rom. 8:6b, 10-11](#)). In [Romans 8](#) we see that our spirit is life and that the mind set on the spirit is life. The Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead gives life to our mortal bodies. He is giving life right now to our mortal body. This is a reality.

*If We Put Ourselves Aside and Remain under the Death of the Cross,
Our Experiencing the Power of Christ's Resurrection,
and Spontaneously, the Power of Resurrection Experienced by Us
Building Up the Body*

If we put ourselves aside and remain under the death of the cross, we will experience the power of Christ's resurrection, and spontaneously, the ^[142]power of resurrection experienced by us will build up the Body ([Phil. 3:10](#); [Eph. 4:12, 16](#)).

*The Expression the Fellowship of His Sufferings
in Philippians 3:10 Referring to the Participation
in Christ's Sufferings, a Necessary Condition
for the Experience of the Power of His Resurrection*

The expression *the fellowship of His sufferings* in [Philippians 3:10](#) refers to the participation in Christ's sufferings, a necessary condition for the experience of the power of His resurrection ([Matt. 20:22-23](#); [Col. 1:24](#)). Christ suffered for redemption. No one can participate in that suffering. But Paul mentions another kind of suffering in [Colossians 1](#). In [verse 24](#) he

says, "I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church." When Paul met the Lord, He said to him, "Why are you persecuting Me?" ([Acts 9:4](#)). Paul was causing parts of "Me," the corporate Christ, to suffer. Surely the Lord has feeling and awareness when His members are suffering. I fully agree without reservation to the burden among the brothers to raise up another generation to bear responsibility in the church and to bear responsibility in the work, but my burden is somewhere else. Who will respond to God's call by the grace of God to pay the price to enter into and continue the ministry, which is produced by revelation plus sufferings? Paul entered into a fellowship. Is there anyone in China or in the Russian-speaking world who knows the fellowship of Christ's sufferings? The Lord sent some brothers among us to Germany. They are there in the power of Christ's resurrection and in the fellowship of His sufferings. It is not something to be feared. It is an honor to be one with the Lord in this way. Paul could write to the Ephesians, "I ask you not to faint at my afflictions for your sake, since they are your glory" ([3:13](#)). In other words, he was saying to them, "My afflictions are for your benefit. Do not worry about me, and do not feel sorry for me. This is for you." He told the Corinthians, "Death operates in us, but life in you" ([2 Cor. 4:12](#)). We can simply enjoy the flow of life released by the ministers of Christ. What a fellowship!

*Our First Experiencing the Power of Christ's Resurrection,
and Then by This Power
Our Being Enabled to Participate in His Sufferings*

We first experience the power of Christ's resurrection, and then by ^[143] this power we are enabled to participate in His sufferings ([Phil. 3:10](#)). It cannot be the other way around. The power of resurrection enables us to bear any suffering necessary for the benefit of the Body of Christ. Some of the deepest sufferings will not be known by anyone. It will not be obvious; it is all inward. We are living in [Matthew 6](#), not giving others even the appearance that we are suffering. We do not pity ourselves or seek any pity from others. We do not give ourselves a medal or want a medal. Rather, we are living a secret life before God the Father. From Brother Nee we learned that when someone lives like this and touches the fountain of life in an unprecedented way, life immediately flows into the Body. Not a word needs to be spoken. What a reward our Brother Nee will receive for living that kind of life. We are here because saints in China paid such a price.

Brother Lee paid such a price to come to this country. It is a privilege that we can participate in Christ's sufferings by the power of His resurrection.

*These Sufferings Being Mainly
for Christ's Body, the Church*

These sufferings are mainly for Christ's Body, the church ([Col. 1:24](#)).

**Philippians 3:10 Also Speaking
of "Being Conformed to His Death";
This Indicating That
Paul Desired to Take Christ's Death
as the Mold of His Life**

[Philippians 3:10](#) also speaks of "being conformed to His death"; this indicates that Paul desired to take Christ's death as the mold of his life.

*Being Conformed to Christ's Death
Being the Base of the Experience of Christ*

Being conformed to Christ's death is the base of the experience of Christ ([1:20-21a](#); [3:9-10](#)).

*The Mold of Christ's Death Referring
to Christ's Continually Putting to Death His Natural Life
So That He Might Live by the Life of God*

The mold of Christ's death refers to Christ's continually putting to death His natural life so that He might live by the life of God ([John 6:57a](#)). The Christ in us wants to repeat this life. We need to put to death all that [144] is natural. Then we are conformed to His death in the power of resurrection.

*By Being Conformed to Christ's Death,
Our Experiencing Christ in His Death
for the Release, Impartation, and Multiplication of Life,
and Our Also Glorifying the Father*

By being conformed to Christ's death, we experience Christ in His death

for the release, impartation, and multiplication of life, and we also glorify the Father (12:24-26, 28; 13:31; 2 Cor. 4:12). Once we have a direct, personal participation in Christ's death, we know the cross, and we do not speak about it religiously anymore. We know the suffering Christ, the man of sorrows, the One who Psalm 102 says was on the housetop like a lone sparrow (v. 7). Then, although we do not have an answer, when we contact someone deep in suffering, our being and our presence ministers the man of sorrows to them, and they are comforted and supplied.

There is no other way for us to take Europe than by being conformed to Christ's death and experiencing Christ in His death for the release, impartation, and multiplication of life. It will not be through a mighty army coming in glory. It will be by the grains of wheat falling into the ground and dying. When the shell is broken, life is released. M. E. Barber went to China and died like this, and Watchman Nee came forth. This is the real service. This is what the Father will reward. Why do we want a name, to be recognized, or to be appreciated? That is all the self. Paul was living this reality before God for God's heart's desire.

**The Result of Being Conformed to Christ's Death
Being That We Attain to the Out-resurrection from the Dead,
Which Will Be a Prize to the Overcomers**

The result of being conformed to Christ's death is that we attain to the out-resurrection from the dead, which will be a prize to the overcomers (Phil. 3:11). We may partially know what the out-resurrection is. The Recovery Version is faithful to the Greek, which says "out-resurrection." Other translations render the same word as just "resurrection." These scholars have no spiritual understanding. Objectively, this is the resurrection of the victors, of the overcomers, who have passed away. They will be part of the man-child. They will be resurrected ahead of the others to enter into the kingdom as co-kings. This is the objective side, but there is a subjective side. [145]

***To Attain to, to Arrive at, the Out-resurrection Meaning That
Our Entire Being Is Gradually and Continually Resurrected***

To attain to, to arrive at, the out-resurrection means that our entire being is gradually and continually resurrected (1 Thes. 5:23). When Christ died, He terminated the entire old creation. The old creation was symbolized by the grave clothes in which He was buried. When He was resurrected, the

grave clothes were left in the tomb, signifying that the old creation was left behind. He as the God-man entered fully into resurrection, that is, fully into God and fully into the new creation. Brother Lee helps us see that the out-resurrection is actually Christ Himself as the One who passed through death and in resurrection entered fully into God and into the new creation. If we aspire or hope to have the overcomers' resurrection, we need to realize that to attain to, to arrive at, the out-resurrection means that our entire being is gradually and continually resurrected.

***The Out-resurrection Being a Resurrection
out of the Old Creation into the New Creation***

The out-resurrection is a resurrection out of the old creation into the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). Paul longed for, was hoping for, and was pursuing this. I want my whole being to be brought into resurrection gradually. We need to pray for this in our life with the Lord based upon light on this verse. We may say, "Lord, I want to enter into the out-resurrection on that day. Lord, I pray, resurrect my whole being little by little, day by day. Do not let anything natural remain. Whatever my intellect, my intelligence, my strength, my people skills, and my mechanical ability are; whatever I have by nature; and whatever has been developed in me by training and education is all natural. Nothing natural does the Body life allow. I do not agree with what is natural within me. I do not know where I am, but You know where I am. Lord, bring my whole being into the out-resurrection. I am open to the experiences that I need." I acknowledge that there will be costly experiences. I will tell you the truth. Sooner or later, we will be brought into resurrection. If it is sooner, we will be in the wedding feast and in the kingdom. If it is later, we need a thousand years to make up time. The choice is ours. We may not like this, but God sets the boundaries—it is either now or then. We should choose today; we only have today. May we be able to say each night that we are a little more in resurrection than when we got up that morning. We should not waste time. We should pursue the out-resurrection. [146]

**LIKE PAUL, OUR NEEDING TO PURSUE CHRIST HIMSELF
AND "PURSUE TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE"**

Like Paul, we should pursue Christ Himself and "pursue toward the goal for the prize" (Phil. 3:12, 14a). If we want to know what it is to pursue Christ, we need to read Song of Songs. [Song of Songs 1:2](#) says, "Let him

kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.” Then [verse 4](#) says, “Draw me; we will run after you.” We should not outwardly consecrate to pursue the Lord. Rather, let us tell the Lord, “Draw me, Lord. I do not rely on my energy. I do not rely on my zeal. I may be excited for a time, but it does not last. Draw me. Then not only I but we will run after You.” From stage to stage the Lord knows how to bring the seeker on. Then she becomes a Shulammitte. She becomes His co-worker. In [chapter 8](#) we see the second kiss. [Verse 1](#) says, “Oh that you were like a brother to me, / Who nursed at my mother’s breasts! / If I found you outside, I would kiss you, / And none would despise me.” In [chapter 8](#) the seeker’s whole being is longing for rapture, for transfiguration. She longs to see the Lord outside the realm of the flesh. This is pursuing.

The root of the Greek word for *persecute* is the same as the word for *pursue*. Footnote 5 of [Philippians 3:12](#) says,

The same Greek word as for *persecute*, meaning also to *press toward*, to *follow after*. In such a way Paul ran the race to obtain the prize and reach maturity. Before he was saved, he persecuted Christ. After he was saved, he pursued Christ to such an extent that he persecuted Christ, but in a positive way.

In [Acts 22:4](#) Paul said, “I persecuted this Way unto death, binding and delivering to prisons both men and women.” In *The Experience of Christ* Brother Lee says, “Anyone who persecutes others is desperate. Paul was desperate to follow after Christ and to seek Christ. We all need such a desperation” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1978, vol. 1, p. 394*). Perhaps in upcoming prayer meetings the Lord will lead us to pray for desperation in a positive way. We should not go on another year and remain in the same state. We must be desperate to go on. May the Lord draw us to run after Him.

**In Order to Pursue Christ,
Our Needing to Not Think That We Have Attained,
and Our Needing to Forget the Things Which Are Behind
and Stretch “Forward to the Things Which Are Before”**

In order to pursue Christ, we should not think that we have attained, ^[147] and we should forget the things which are behind and stretch “forward to the things which are before” ([Phil. 3:12-13](#)).

The Goal toward Which We Are Pursuing

**Being the Full Enjoyment and Gaining of Christ,
and the Prize Being the Uttermost Enjoyment of Christ
in the Millennial Kingdom
as a Reward to the Victorious Runners
of the New Testament Race**

The goal toward which we are pursuing is the full enjoyment and gaining 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 (v. 14; 1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 10:35; 11:26; 12:1-2).

The writer of [Psalm 73](#) was perplexed at why the good and righteous people were suffering but evildoers were somehow materially blessed. He was really bothered until he went in to the sanctuary of God, and then he understood their end (vv. 16-17). The ministry helps us see that there is light in the sanctuary. While one of the brothers was ministering another message in this series, I was in tune with his message; nevertheless, light began to shine in response to a question that was in me—what motivated Paul to pursue Christ in such a way? Now I would like to present ten matters of my present understanding of this. I am a learner. After presenting these ten, the Lord may show me more. Perhaps we will release all of this in an upcoming conference. Paul is our pattern. Our prayer to the Lord should be, “You took Paul the foremost sinner and gained him. You can, You want to, and You are able to do the same thing in us. Lord, do the same thing in us for the Body.”

First, Paul was motivated by the vision of Christ in His supreme preciousness. He also had the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. He saw the One of peerless worth. Seeing this Christ drew him. Paul was governed by this vision. He told the king, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision” ([Acts 26:19](#)). This vision directed, ruled, and governed him. When we are down and seemingly cannot go on, our seeing the vision causes us to rise up. Later we may become discouraged again, but the governing vision enables us to rise up again.

Second, Paul had a revelation concerning the unsearchable riches of Christ and the all-inclusiveness of Christ. Paul saw that Christ is vast, that He is immeasurable in length, breadth, height, and depth and that He is unsearchably rich. Paul could not stop pursuing when there were such [\[148\]](#) vast riches to explore. I believe we will be pursuing after a trillion, billion years in the new heaven and the new earth. It will never end. The river will keep flowing.

Third, Paul's experience and enjoyment of Christ caused him to desire more of Christ. It is wonderful to enjoy a meal that is both healthy and delicious. When someone says, "This is good for you," it may mean that there is no enjoyment. Paul experienced and enjoyed Christ, and that joy motivated him to desire more.

Fourth, Paul longed to experience and participate in Christ as the out-resurrection. God put this in him. Paul was not faking this. This longing was in his being. We either have the longing or we do not. We need to ask God to put this longing in us.

Fifth, Paul realized that he had not yet arrived or laid hold of Christ. He said, "Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected" (Phil. 3:12). Paul was an ultramature apostle, yet near the end of his course, he was in effect saying, "I have not been perfected. I have not obtained. I have not arrived." This was also Brother Lee's spirit until the end. When Brother Lee was approaching the age of ninety, he began releasing the high peak of the divine revelation, which is the highest revelation recovered to match the highest revelation of the apostles. Both Paul and Brother Lee were always pressing on to the end, to their last breath.

Sixth, Paul knew that all things other than Christ are vanity. Everything under the sun is vanity of vanities. Due to a certain traumatic experience when I was nineteen, my sense was that life is meaningless, even absurd, although I still believed in God. I immersed myself in philosophy, literature, and painting. These pursuits reinforced this notion that the whole thing is a joke. I knew I was saved; I believed in the Lord. I still had the call to ministry, whatever that meant to me at the time. It was not until I picked up a copy of *The Stream* magazine and learned about God's purpose for the church that I realized why I exist. This was my view—it is either God's eternal purpose to fulfill the desire of His heart or the whole thing is vain, absurd, and meaningless. It is vanity of vanities. When my daughter was still in her mother's womb, I prayed for her: "Lord, as soon as possible after birth, show her the vanity of this world." She was saved when she was twelve. Then when she was fifteen, she stood up in a church meeting and said, "I am beginning to see it." She was a "church kid" going through all the stages of human life yet realizing that only Christ and the church are meaningful. You may need to get a Ph.D. for your career. But when they put the hood and the gown on you, you may realize that you [149] are still thirsty. You will feel empty because a Ph.D. is dung. It is nothing and is meaningless. Christ is truly everything.

Seventh, Paul pursued Christ because he lived in the divine romance.

That is why he could tell the Corinthians, “I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2). It is as if Paul was saying, “I have a betrothing ministry. I would like you to begin a courtship with the God-man Jesus, the Bridegroom, who gave Himself up for you. I am loving Him, pursuing Him, and presenting Him to you. I have betrothed you to Christ.” The ministry of the age is a betrothing ministry. I had the leading in the winter of 1973 to begin writing the words to *Hymns*, #1159 because I absorbed the contents of the hymn from Watchman Nee’s message entitled “The Goal of the Gospel” (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 33, pp. 185-197). I absorbed this from a betrothing ministry. My whole being longs for the wedding. If He would come now as the Bridegroom, I would stop the message and ascend. Let someone else finish it. This motivated Paul and should motivate us.

Eighth, Paul’s goal was to receive the crown of righteousness and to reign with Christ in the coming kingdom. In 2 Timothy 4:8 he says, “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.”

Ninth, by pursuing the Lord, Paul was running the race set before him. Hebrews 12:1-2 says,

Let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us, looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

This is the course. We are not competing with anyone. We are running to finish what is measured out to us. This race is an ultramarathon, and we can only do it by looking away unto Jesus, by gazing at His glorious face. He is a magnet; He keeps drawing us on. The enemy will attack us. But a verse that I love to quote to the enemy from Micah 7:8 says, “Do not rejoice against me, O my enemy; / When I fall, I will rise up; / When I sit in the darkness, / Jehovah will be a light to me.” Based on this, I declare to him, “Shut your mouth, enemy. Although you have knocked me down and I was distracted, I am still running, and I will not stop until I finish the course.” [150]

Finally, Paul was a channel of supply. Philippians 1:23-25 says,
I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart

and be with Christ, for this is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith.

Paul had been to Paradise. He said it is far better. But he needed to remain with the believers for their progress and joy in the faith. Paul was a channel of supply. Such sisters and brothers are indispensable. Still today there are whole countries in which there is no channel of supply because there is no one through whom the Lord can flow unhindered. However, the Lord is sending some to Europe. He will send more to Europe. The Lord sent Brother Lee to this country. Paul was a channel of supply, and he was pursuing Christ not primarily for his own spirituality but for the Body, for the bride, for the church, for the kingdom. He was pursuing the Lord unto the end, always advancing so that the saints profiting from his ministry would never be held back.

What did these motivations produce in Paul? What kind of person did he become at the consummation? In [Philippians 2:17-18](#) he says, “Even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all. And in like manner you also rejoice, and you rejoice together with me.” In [2 Timothy 4:6](#) he says, “I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand.” Paul would say, “I lived a sacrificing life through Christ as the vine producing the grapes to become the cheering wine, and I got permeated, saturated, filled with Christ as the wine of life until I became joyful wine for God and for you. Now at the very end, I just pour myself out upon the sacrifice and service of your faith.” What a consummation!—R. K.