

## **Week Five**

# **Having No Confidence in the Flesh and Counting All Things to Be Loss on Account of Christ and the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:3-8

### **Outline**

#### **Day 1**

- I. **We who believe in Christ should have no confidence in the flesh; our confidence should be wholly in the Lord—Phil. 3:3b:**
  - A. The flesh in Philippians 3:3 and 4 comprises all that we are and have in our natural being.
  - B. In these verses confidence in the flesh refers to all the good items or qualifications that we have in the flesh; the honorable, lovable, and superior aspects of our natural being are still the flesh.
  - C. The greatest problems among God's children are that they do not know what the flesh is and that their flesh has not been dealt with—Rom. 8:8; Gal. 5:24:
    - 1. Self-confidence is the characteristic of the flesh; the most obvious sign of unchecked flesh is self-confidence—cf. 3:2-3.
    - 2. Confidence in the flesh keeps us from Christ—Phil. 3:3-4, 10.

#### **Day 2**

- D. As believers in Christ, we should be those who have no confidence in the flesh, no trust in our natural ability or heritage—vv. 3-6:
1. Although we have been regenerated, we may continue to live in our fallen nature, boast in what we do in the flesh, and have confidence in our natural qualifications—Gal. 3:2-3.
  2. Only when we have been enlightened by God will we be able to say truly that we have no trust in our natural qualifications, ability, or intelligence; only then will we be able to testify that we have no confidence in the flesh and that our confidence is wholly in the Lord—Phil. 3:3; Prov. 3:5-6.
- E. If we would experience Christ, we must not trust in the flesh but trust only in the Lord; this is the secret to the experience of Christ—Phil. 3:3.

## Day 3

- II. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His person—v. 8; Matt. 17:5; Col. 1:13:
- A. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is not the knowledge that belongs to Christ, the knowledge that Christ Himself has; rather, this knowledge is our subjective knowing of Christ—John 17:3:
1. In Philippians 3:8 knowledge actually means a revelation, a vision, concerning Christ and His excellency—Gal. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:17-23.
  2. When Christ was revealed to him by God, Paul saw the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, and the surpassing worth of Christ—Acts 9:3-5, 20, 22; 22:13-16; 26:13-16.
- B. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is the excellency of Christ realized by us—John 16:13-14; Gal. 1:15-16:
1. We need to have a vision of the preciousness of Christ and the

**excellency of the knowledge of the all-inclusive, unlimited Christ—1 Pet. 2:4, 7; Col. 1:12, 15-19; 2:2-3, 9, 16-17; 3:4, 10.**

## **Day 4**

- 2. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ comes by revelation; without the revelation concerning Christ, we cannot know Christ—Matt. 16:17; 11:27; Gal. 1:15-16; John 17:3.**
- C. **If we would experience Christ, we first need to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ—Phil. 3:7-10:**
  - 1. We cannot experience Christ without knowing Him through a revelation of Him—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19.**
  - 2. If we do not have a higher revelation of Christ, we cannot have a higher experience of Christ—1 John 5:20.**
  - 3. Our experience of Christ cannot surpass the excellency of our knowledge of Christ—Eph. 1:17-21; 3:14-19.**

## **Day 5**

- III. On account of (or because of) the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul counted all things to be loss—Phil. 3:8a:**
  - A. **Paul placed great value on the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; this is indicated by the words my Lord, which convey his intimate, tender feelings concerning Christ.**
  - B. **Paul's eyes were opened to see the excellency of the wonderful, all-inclusive Christ; on account of this excellency, he counted as loss all things, whether they related to religious gain or natural gain.**
  - C. **In verse 8 all things indicates that Paul dropped not only religious things but all things on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; thus, to Paul, the loss of all things was the loss of everything.**

- D. **The more we have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the more we will count as loss everything religious and natural—vv. 4-8a.**

**IV. On account of Christ, Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse in order to gain Christ—vv. 7, 8b:**

- A. **All things in verse 8 includes the things of religion, philosophy, and culture; Paul suffered the loss of all these things because they were substitutes for Christ, hooks used by Satan to keep people from Christ and the experience of Christ.**

## **Day 6**

- B. **We gain Christ by suffering the loss of all things that were once a gain for us and by counting them as refuse—vv. 4, 8:**
- 1. The Greek word for gain in verse 8 means “to secure, to obtain, to lay hold of.”**
  - 2. To gain Christ is to gain His person, to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His unsearchable riches—Eph. 3:8.**
  - 3. Like Paul, we should not only count all things as loss on account of Christ (Phil. 3:7) but also suffer the loss of all things and count all things as refuse (v. 8).**
  - 4. The more we suffer the loss of all things and count them as refuse on account of Christ, the more we will gain Christ for our experience and enjoyment—vv. 7-8.**

## **WEEK 5 — DAY 1**

### **Morning Nourishment**

**Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.**

**Rom. 8:8 And those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

Many Christians think that having confidence in the flesh means having confidence in the sinful elements of our human nature, but this is not the meaning of flesh in Philippians 3:3.... After Paul says that he had no confidence in the flesh, he goes on to say that he was circumcised the eighth day, that he was of the race of Israel, that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, that he was a Hebrew born of the Hebrews, that as to the law he was a Pharisee, that as to zeal he persecuted the church, and that as to the righteousness which is in the law he had become blameless. All these things were aspects of Paul's flesh. However, probably you have never regarded such things as the flesh. We think that the flesh includes only evil things but not good things. Nevertheless, the honorable, lovable, and superior aspects of our natural being are still the flesh. All that Paul did as to the law and as to zeal was flesh and of the flesh. His righteousness as to the law was also flesh. All the seven characteristics listed by Paul in these verses are aspects of the flesh because they all are natural and are neither of Christ nor of the Spirit of God. Anything natural, whether it is good or evil, is the flesh. The Jews had confidence in their flesh, having confidence in what they were by their natural birth. But we Christians should not have confidence in anything we have by our natural birth, for anything of our natural birth is part of the flesh. (CWWL, 1978, vol. 1, "The Experience of Christ," p. 412)

### **Today's Reading**

In order to experience Christ, we need to see that everything we do must be by the Spirit of God, in Christ, and with no confidence in the flesh....Do not think that foolishness is of the flesh and that wisdom is necessarily of the Spirit. As long as it is natural, wisdom is just as fleshly as

foolishness....To Paul, whatever he was by his natural birth was the flesh. We should not have any confidence in our natural being. As long as we have confidence in our natural being, we are through with the experience of Christ. (CWNL, 1978, vol. 1, "The Experience of Christ," pp. 412-413)

The greatest problem among God's children is that they do not know what the flesh is! The flesh that many Christians know is merely related to the matter of sin. It is true that the flesh causes us to sin. But the flesh does not cause man to just sin. Romans 8:8 says that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God." This means that the flesh has tried to please God. Many times, the goal of the flesh may not be to try to offend God; its goal may be to try to please God.... However, it cannot make it. Our experience tells us that it is comparatively easy to deal with the sinning flesh, but it is very difficult to deal with the flesh that tries to please God.

The most obvious sign of unchecked flesh is self-confidence. Self-confidence is the characteristic of the flesh. Philippians 3:3 says, 'We are the circumcision, the ones who...have no confidence in the flesh.' To put no trust in the flesh is to have no confidence in the flesh. All those who have been smitten by the cross are broken. Although their person may remain, they have learned to fear God and no longer put their trust and confidence in themselves. Before a person is dealt with by the Lord, he quickly judges anything that comes his way. He opens his mouth and makes judgments quickly. But after a person has been dealt with by the Lord, he does not judge lightly; he no longer has any confidence. No one who makes quick proposals and believes in his own strength knows the cross. Such a person has never experienced the work of the cross. Once our flesh is circumcised, we will not believe in ourselves any longer. We will not be that full of confidence, and we will not express our opinions easily. Before the Lord, we must see that we are weak, powerless, helpless, and faltering. (CWWN, vol. 35, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," pp. 66-67)

Further Reading: CWNL, 1978, vol. 1, "The Experience of Christ," chs. 6 -8; CWWN, vol. 35, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," ch. 5

## **WEEK 5 — DAY 2**

### **Morning Nourishment**

**Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.**

**Col. 2:11 In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ.**

Paul's word in Philippians 3:1-6 is...related to the experience of Christ. Had Paul remained a Judaizer, it would have been impossible for him to experience Christ. But because he became another kind of person, one who served by the Spirit of God, boasted in Christ Jesus, and had no confidence in the flesh, he could enjoy Christ and experience Him in a very rich way. We also should be those who have no confidence in the flesh, in our natural ability, or in our heritage or tradition. Rather, we should be those who serve God by the Spirit, who boast in Christ, and who put no trust in the flesh. If we are such persons, we shall have the genuine experience of Christ. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 144-145)

### **Today's Reading**

Even though we have been regenerated, we may continue to live in our fallen nature, boast in what we do in the flesh, and have confidence in our natural qualifications. We have pointed out that in Philippians 3:2 the dogs, the evil workers, and the concision refer respectively to the fallen nature, deeds, and religion. If we continue to live according to our old nature, boast in what we do in ourselves, and have confidence in our qualifications, we shall be the same as the Judaizers. As a result, we shall cause problems in the church, and we shall not be able to progress in the experience of Christ. In order to experience Christ, we must serve by the Spirit of God, not by our fallen nature; boast in Christ, not in our own doings; and not trust our natural qualifications, but trust only in the Lord. This is a secret to the experience of Christ.

We may consider within ourselves that we are different from the Judaizers. However, we may still live in our old nature, boast in our deeds, and have trust in our natural qualifications. I do not have the assurance that most of the saints fully condemn their fallen nature. Instead, many may still live, move, and act according to the “dog” nature. Furthermore, to some extent at least, we may still boast in our deeds, considering ourselves intelligent and capable. Moreover, we also may have confidence in our flesh, in our natural qualifications.

It is important that we all be deeply and personally touched by these verses in Philippians 3. We need the Lord’s light to shine on us concerning our nature, our deeds, and our confidence in the flesh. If we are enlightened by the Lord, we shall confess that although we have been regenerated to become children of God with the divine life and nature, we still live too much in our “dog” nature. Yes, we have a right to proclaim the fact that we are children of God. But if this declaration is contrasted with our daily experience, it may be little more than a doctrine to us. One day, when the light shines on you concerning this, you will want to prostrate yourself before the Lord and confess how unclean your nature is. Then you will condemn everything you do by your fallen nature. You will see that in the eyes of God whatever is done in the fallen nature is evil and worthy of condemnation. Formerly, we boasted in our deeds and qualifications. But the time will come when instead of boasting in the flesh with its qualifications, we shall condemn it. Then we shall boast in Christ alone, realizing that in ourselves we have absolutely no ground for boasting.

Only when we have been enlightened by God shall we be able to say truly that we have no trust in our natural qualifications, ability, or intelligence. Only then shall we be able to testify that our confidence is wholly in the Lord. After we are enlightened in this way, we shall be able to experience Christ. I hope that many among us will see this light and turn from a mere objective understanding of these verses to the subjective enjoyment and experience of Christ. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 145-146)

Further Reading: Life-study of Philippians, msg. 17

## **WEEK 5 — DAY 3**

### **Morning Nourishment**

**Phil. 3:8 ...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.**

**Matt. 17:5 ...Behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!**

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His person. The Jews consider the law of God given through Moses the most excellent thing in history. Hence, they are zealous for the law. Paul participated in that zeal. But when Christ was revealed to him by God (Gal. 1:15-16), he saw that the excellency, the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, the surpassing worth, of Christ far exceeded the excellency of the law. His knowledge of Christ issued in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. On account of this, not only did he count the law and the religion founded on the law to be loss, but he counted all things loss.

Here Paul speaks not directly of the excellency of Christ, but of the excellency of knowing Christ. The knowledge in Philippians 3:8 is not the knowledge that belongs to Christ, the knowledge that Christ Himself has; it is our subjective knowing of Christ. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His person. There can be no doubt that in Himself Christ is excellent. But if...we lack the knowledge of Christ's excellency, His excellency will not mean anything to us. (Life-study of Philippians, p. 157)

### **Today's Reading**

Before Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, he did not have any knowledge of Christ. He treasured the law and regarded it as most excellent. Paul's zeal for the law was a sign of his appreciation of the law. His zeal came out of his appreciation. Paul certainly was proud of his excellent

knowledge of the law. Even though Christ is infinitely more excellent than the law, Paul did not have the knowledge of Christ. But at the time of his conversion, this excellent One was revealed to him. With this revelation of Christ, Paul began to have the knowledge of Christ. After he began to acquire the knowledge of Christ, Paul came to realize that the knowledge of the law received through Gamaliel was far inferior to the knowledge of Christ. Conscious of this comparison as he was writing Philippians 3:5-8, Paul could speak of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and of suffering the loss of all things for the excellency of this knowledge.

To be sure, the excellency is in the very person of Christ. But for our experience, our realization of this excellency depends on our knowledge. If we lack knowledge, there is simply no way for us to realize that this person is so excellent. Only when we come to know His excellency do we have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. How precious is this excellency of the knowledge of Christ!

Gaining the excellency of the knowledge of Christ may be illustrated by the experience of tourists shopping in Hong Kong. The merchants there know how to display their products, especially jade, in a way to make them very attractive to tourists. Often when tourists see precious items on display, they become excited. Furthermore, they acquire a knowledge of the excellency of these things. Before they entered the store, they did not know anything of the excellency of these precious items. But once they saw them and gained the excellency of the knowledge concerning them, they were willing to pay the price to possess them. In like manner, we need a revelation of Christ's excellency, of His supreme preciousness. If we have a revelation of Christ's excellency, we shall automatically have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. By knowledge we actually mean a revelation, a vision, concerning Christ and His excellence.... Paul was captured by the excellency of knowing Christ, and for the sake of this knowledge, he was willing to drop all things and count them to be loss. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 157-158, 161)

Further Reading: Life-study of Philippians, msg. 19

## **WEEK 5 — DAY 4**

### **Morning Nourishment**

**Matt. 16:17 ...Jesus...said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in the heavens.**

**11:27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one fully knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone fully know the Father except the Son and him to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

[Philippians 3:8] speaks of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ....To experience Christ we first need the knowledge of Christ. We must know Him. This chapter stresses very much the knowledge of Christ. Verse 10 says, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection." Therefore, to know Him is crucial to our experience of Him. We cannot experience Him without knowing Him. The knowledge of Christ is excellent, and this knowledge is even an excellency.... We must stress here the knowing of Christ. Christ Himself stressed that He would build His church not upon Himself as the rock but upon the revelation concerning Him. The revelation is for knowing. Without the revelation concerning Christ surely we could not know Him. We need this revelation to know Christ. (CWWL, 1985, vol. 3, "Elders' Training, Book 6: The Crucial Points of the Truth in Paul's Epistles," pp. 524-525)

### **Today's Reading**

In the four books that make up the heart of the divine revelation—Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians—Paul opens the veil to show us who Christ is and what Christ is. Christ is all-inclusive and all-extensive, the reality of every positive thing in the universe. He is the reality of God, man, eternity, light, and life. We simply do not have adequate words to declare who and what Christ is.

Only recently have I been impressed with the extensiveness of Christ. One day as I was speaking on the Christ revealed in Colossians, I

spontaneously used the term extensive and pointed out that the revelation in Colossians concerning Christ is extensive, even all-extensive, for Christ is more extensive than the whole universe. He is immeasurable, limitless. Hence, He is not only all-inclusive, but also all-extensive.

Colossians 2:16-17 says, "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, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ." These verses indicate that Christ is our eating, drinking, feast, new moon, and Sabbath. He is the body, the reality, the substance, of all the positive things in the universe. He is the reality of the air we breathe, of the food we eat, and of the sunshine we enjoy. Furthermore, He is the reality of both the Triune God and of man.

When we teach that Christ is all-inclusive, the reality of all positive things in the universe, some go so far as to accuse us of teaching pantheism.... We utterly repudiate pantheism and declare that it is a devilish teaching. We do not preach pantheism in any way. However, according to the Bible, we do teach that Christ is God, man, and the reality of all positive things. But this does not mean that the material things in the universe are God Himself. We are not God and we never shall become God. Nevertheless, Christ is in us and, in a very real sense, He is even becoming us. Colossians 3:10 and 11 say, "And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all." These verses also point to the all-inclusiveness of Christ. In the new man, the Body, the church, there cannot be Greek and Jew. Likewise, there cannot be Chinese and American, German and French. In the new man Christ is all and in all. He is all the members and in all the members. This means that in the new man Christ is you and Christ is me. He truly is all-inclusive and all-extensive. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 158-160)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1985, vol. 3, "Elders' Training, Book 6: The Crucial Points of the Truth in Paul's Epistles," ch. 7; Life-study of Philippians, msgs. 19-21

## **WEEK 5 — DAY 5**

### **Morning Nourishment**

**Gal. 1:15-16 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.**

Many readers of Philippians take the word excellency [in 3:8] to refer not to the knowledge of Christ but to Christ Himself. However, Paul specifically and definitely speaks of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

In verse 7 Paul says “on account of Christ,” but in verse 8 he goes further and says “on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” The addition of the words my Lord indicates that as Paul was writing, he was filled with intimate, tender feelings concerning Christ. Tender feelings concerning the preciousness of the Lord Jesus rose up within him, causing him to speak of “Christ Jesus my Lord.” Paul placed great value on the excellency of the knowledge of his dear Lord Jesus Christ. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 156-157)

### **Today's Reading**

We still hold on to our national philosophy and domestic logic. Those from one part of the country hold to their logic, and those from another region cling to their philosophy. Holding to our domestic logic and national philosophy deprives us of Christ. In a sense, this drives Christ away from us in our experience. In a subtle, secret, and hidden way, the religious, philosophical, and cultural things occupy the believers, even the best of Christians, and keep them from the experience of Christ. Wherever you may go in the world today, you will find that Christ simply does not have a way with any nationality or group of people. In every part of the world, the national philosophy and the domestic logic are so strong that there is little ground in the believers for Christ.

If we would get into the depths of Paul's thought in Philippians 3:7 and 8, we would realize that Paul was very concerned about the matters of

religion, philosophy, and culture. His word about the dogs, the evil workers, and the concision in verse 2 confirms this. The concision, a contemptuous term for circumcision, is a matter not only related to religion, but is a matter especially related to Jewish culture. Moreover, Jewish culture is based upon Jewish philosophy and logic. In verse 3 Paul says that we are the circumcision, who serve by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Then he goes on to give the reasons he once had for confidence in the flesh, listing seven items related to Jewish religion, philosophy, and culture. These are the very things Paul counted as loss on account of Christ. Do you know why he counted them loss? It is because they were all substitutes for Christ, hooks used by Satan to keep people from Christ and from the experience of Christ. How subtle is the enemy in keeping us from the experience of Christ! Oh, the subtlety of the enemy needs to be exposed! To some extent at least, we still have within us certain things which are a substitute for Christ in a subtle, secret way. These substitutes mainly involve religion, philosophy, and culture. As a result, we still are not fully and thoroughly occupied by Christ. We have not yet counted all things loss on account of Christ.

We cannot experience Christ if we only drop the worldly, material things. If this is our understanding of all things in 3:8, we are far from the experience of Christ revealed here. These verses are not shallow. According to the context, Paul is not speaking of superficial, outward things. He is not concerned mainly with material things. His concept is much deeper and is related to religious, philosophical, and cultural things, even to our domestic logic and national philosophy, things hidden deep within us.... It is very difficult for us to set aside these things in order to give ground to Christ and experience Him. During my lifetime I have met many Christians. But I do not know many who have been able to drop their national philosophy and domestic logic in favor of the experience of Christ. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 150-152)

Further Reading: Life-study of Philippians, msgs. 18-19

## **WEEK 5 — DAY 6**

### **Morning Nourishment**

**Phil. 3:7-8 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ....On account of [Christ] I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ.**

To gain Christ is to gain His very person. Christ is the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9) and the reality of the shadows of all positive things (Col. 2:16-17). To gain Him is to experience, enjoy, and take possession of His unsearchable riches (Eph. 3:8).

There is no comparison between any gain and Christ. If we make such a comparison, we shall count everything loss. The reason we regarded certain things as gain in the past was that we did not know Christ. But once our eyes were opened to see Christ, we began to realize how foolish it was to keep those other things. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 1543)

### **Today's Reading**

All the things which were once gains to Paul hindered him and held him back from participating in Christ and enjoying Him. Hence, on account of Christ, all the gains were a loss to him. Paul counted as loss on account of Christ not only the things of his former religion but all other things as well.

We may think that the things in Philippians 3:8 refer to worldly, material things. In a sense, this understanding is partly right. However, ...according to verses 5 and 6, Paul's concept is not mainly related to material things. It is true, of course, that worldly, material things occupy people and keep them from experiencing Christ. However, Paul realized that the things which really frustrate people from experiencing Christ are mainly the things of religion, philosophy, and culture. If we get into Paul's spirit and thought in Philippians 3, we shall realize that as he was writing he was thinking of religion, philosophy, and culture when he spoke of "all things." The "all things" in verse 8 must certainly include the three categories of religious, philosophical, and cultural things. If we would drop our religion, philosophy, and culture, we would truly abandon everything.

By dropping these three categories of things, we would automatically drop the worldly, material things, which are actually dominated by religion, philosophy, and culture. Although it is easy to overcome the influence of material things, it is very difficult to overcome religion, philosophy, and culture. We cannot experience Christ if we count as loss only the worldly, material things. In order to gain Christ, we need to count all things as loss, including the things of religion, philosophy, and culture.

Like Paul, we should not only count all things loss on account of Christ but also count all things refuse. The Greek word for refuse in Philippians 3:8 refers to dregs, rubbish, filth, what is thrown to the dogs; hence, dog food, dung. There is no comparison between such things and Christ. The more we count all things loss and refuse on account of Christ, the more we shall gain Christ for our experience and enjoyment. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1544-1545)

Some brothers and sisters in the church life come to the meetings in the way of window-shopping. They enjoy listening to the messages, but they do not pay the price to gain Christ. To pay the price is to suffer the loss of all things. First, Paul counted as loss all religious gain and all gain by natural birth. Then he counted all things as loss and suffered the loss of all things. He did this in order to gain the Christ he had seen. A number of times I have spent a large amount of money to buy a particular item. After purchasing that item and bringing it home, I began to regret the price I had paid for it. However, when I considered the item and realized the excellency of it, I did not care about the price I had paid. This is why Paul said that after suffering the loss of all things, he counted them as refuse. What he paid to gain Christ was nothing but dung, dog food, trash, rubbish, refuse. He did not regret the price he had paid. (CW WL, 1978, vol. 1, "The Experience of Christ," p. 425)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 142, 168, 348; CW WL, 1978, vol. 1, "The Experience of Christ," chs. 11-14

**<< WEEK 5 — HYMN >>**

**Hymns, #437 Hast thou heard Him, seen Him, known Him**

**Consecration — Attracted by the Lord's Beauty**

1

Hast thou heard Him, seen Him, known Him?

Is not thine a captured heart?

Chief among ten thousand own Him;

Joyful choose the better part.

Captivated by His beauty,

Worthy tribute haste to bring;

Let His peerless worth constrain thee,

Crown Him now unrivaled King.

2

Idols once they won thee, charmed thee,

Lovely things of time and sense;

Gilded thus does sin disarm thee,

Honeyed lest thou turn thee thence.

3

What has stripped the seeming beauty

From the idols of the earth?

Not a sense of right or duty,

But the sight of peerless worth.

4

Not the crushing of those idols,

With its bitter void and smart;

But the beaming of His beauty,

The unveiling of His heart.

5

Who extinguishes their taper

Till they hail the rising sun?  
Who discards the garb of winter  
Till the summer has begun?

6

' Tis that look that melted Peter,  
'Tis that face that Stephen saw,  
' Tis that heart that wept with Mary,  
Can alone from idols draw:

7

Draw and win and fill completely,  
Till the cup o'erflow the brim;  
What have we to do with idols  
Who have companied with Him?