

Message Five

Knowing the Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings and Being Conformed to His Death

RM Hymns: 639, 749

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:7-10; John 11:25; Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 1:24

Phil 3:7	But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
Phil 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
Phil 3:9	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,
Phil 3:10	To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
John 11:25	Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
Eph 1:19	And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,
Eph 1:20	Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,
Col 1:24	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;

I. Paul aspired to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings—Phil. 3:10:

- Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- A. With Christ, the sufferings and death came first, followed by the resurrection; with us, the power of His resurrection comes first, followed by the participation in His sufferings and conformity to His death—v. 10.
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- B. We first receive the power of His resurrection; then by this power we are enabled to participate in His sufferings and live a crucified life in conformity to His death.
- C. Christ's sufferings are of two categories: those for accomplishing redemption, which were completed by Christ Himself, and those for producing and building the church, which need to be filled up by the apostles and the believers—Col. 1:24:
Col 1:24 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;
1. We cannot participate in Christ's sufferings for redemption, but we must take part in the sufferings of Christ for the producing and building up of the Body—cf. Rev. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; 2 Cor. 1:5-6; 4:12; 6:8-11.
- Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- 2 Tim 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the chosen ones, that they themselves also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
- 2 Cor 1:5 For even as the sufferings of the Christ abound unto us, so through the Christ our comfort also abounds.
- 2 Cor 1:6 But whether we are afflicted, it is for your comforting and salvation; or whether we are comforted, it is for your comforting, which operates in the endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer.
- 2 Cor 4:12 So then death operates in us, but life in you.
- 2 Cor 6:8 Through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true;
- 2 Cor 6:9 As unknown and yet well known; as dying and yet behold we live; as being disciplined and yet not being put to death;

- 2 Cor 6:10 As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.
- 2 Cor 6:11 Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged.
2. Christ as the Lamb of God suffered for redemption (John 1:29); Christ as the grain of wheat suffered for reproducing and building (12:24):
- John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- a. The Lord, as a grain of wheat that fell into the ground, lost His soul-life through death so that He might release His eternal life in resurrection to the many grains—10:11, 15, 17-18.
- John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- John 10:15 Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.
- John 10:17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.
- John 10:18 No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment I received from My Father.
- b. The one grain did not complete all the sufferings that are needed for the building up of the Body; as the many grains, we must suffer in the same way the one grain suffered—12:24-26:
- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- John 12:25 He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life.
- John 12:26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.
- (1) As the many grains, we also must lose our soul-life through death that we may enjoy eternal life in resurrection—v. 25.
- John 12:25 He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life.
- (2) This is to follow Him that we may serve Him and walk with Him on this way, the way of losing our soul-life and living in His resurrection—v. 26.
- John 12:26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.
- (3) The way for the church to come into being and to increase is not by human glory; it is by the death of the cross—vv. 20-24.
- John 12:20 And there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the feast.
- John 12:21 These then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we wish to see Jesus.
- John 12:22 Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew came, and Philip too, and they told Jesus.
- John 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- D. There is a difference between the sufferings that are for our transformation and the sufferings that are for the Body—2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24:
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
- Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

- Col 1:24 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;
1. Paul's word in Philippians 3:10 does not refer to sufferings for transformation.
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
 2. If we compare 3:10 with Colossians 1:24, we will see that the sufferings about which Paul was speaking in Philippians 3:10 are those that make up the lack of Christ's afflictions for the Body.
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
Col 1:24 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;
 3. In Colossians 1:24 Paul regarded his own sufferings as the filling up of what is lacking of Christ's sufferings for His Body.
Col 1:24 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;
 4. The sufferings of Christ for His Body are still going on, and we need to share in them—Phil. 3:10; cf. Acts 9:4-5.
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?
Acts 9:5 And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.
 5. It is when we suffer for the Body that we experience the power of Christ's resurrection—Col. 1:24; Phil. 3:10.
Col 1:24 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;
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

II. In Philippians 3:10 Paul spoke of “being conformed to His death”; this expression indicates that Paul desired to take Christ's death as the mold of his life:

- A. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ, counting all things as loss, gaining Christ, being found in Him, knowing Him, knowing the power of His resurrection, and knowing the fellowship of His sufferings all issue in one thing—being conformed to Christ's death—vv. 7-10.
Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
Phil 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
Phil 3:9 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,
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
 - B. Being conformed to Christ's death indicates that His death is a mold—v. 10:
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
1. The center of Philippians 3 is the matter of being conformed to the mold of Christ's death—vv. 7, 9, 12-16.
Phil 3 be omitted.
Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

- Phil 3:9 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,
- Phil 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.
- Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
- Phil 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you.
- Phil 3:16 Nevertheless whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk.
2. We have been placed into this mold of death, and now we need to be conformed to this mold—Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3-5.
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- Rom 6:3 Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?
- Rom 6:4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.
- Rom 6:5 For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection,
3. The power of the resurrection life of Christ in us leads us, carries us, bears us, and places us into the mold of Christ's death—John 11:25; Eph. 1:19-20.
- John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
- Eph 1:19 And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,
- Eph 1:20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,
- C. The mold of Christ's death refers to Christ's experience of continually putting to death His human life that He might live by the life of God—John 6:57a:
- John 6:57a As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, ...
1. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He lived a crucified life; by living a crucified life He was alive to God and lived Him—Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 5:24.
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- Gal 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly portrayed crucified?
- Gal 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.
2. He always put His human life to death so that the divine life within Him could flow out—John 10:10b-11, 17.
- John 10:10b ... I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- John 10:17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.
3. As He was living, He was also dying—dying to the old creation in order to live a life in the new creation; this is the meaning of "His death" in Philippians 3:10.
- Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

- D. To be conformed to Christ's death is to take Christ's death as the mold of our life—v. 10:
 Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
1. Christ's death is a mold to which we are conformed in much the same way that dough is put into a cake mold and conformed to it.
 2. God has put us into the mold of Christ's death, and day by day God is molding us to conform us to this death—Rom. 6:3-4.
 Rom 6:3 Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?
 Rom 6:4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.
 3. Our life should be conformed to such a mold—dying to our human life in order to live the divine life—Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:10-11.
 Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
 2 Cor 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.
 2 Cor 4:11 For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
 4. If we put to death our natural life, we will have the consciousness that we have another life, the divine life, within us; this life will be released, and then in our experience we will be conformed to Christ's death—John 10:10b; 1 John 5:11-12.
 John 10:10b ... I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
 1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
 5. In the mold of Christ's death the natural man is killed, the old man is crucified, and the self is nullified—2 Cor. 4:16; Rom. 6:6; Matt. 16:24.
 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
 Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
 Matt 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.
 6. If we allow our circumstances to press us into this mold, our daily life will be molded into the form of Christ's death—Rom. 8:28-29.
 Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
 Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- E. The only way to glorify God is to be conformed to Christ's death; the more we are conformed to Christ's death, the more we glorify the Father—John 12:28; 13:31.
 John 12:28 Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came out of heaven: I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.
 John 13:31 Then when he went out, Jesus said, Now has the Son of Man been glorified, and God has been glorified in Him.