

EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (3)

KEY STATEMENTS

We need to learn Christ as the secret of being transformed, that is, of being metabolically changed in our natural life, in any kind of environment, situation, or circumstance; this practical and simple secret is to practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, we will live Christ.

In order to experience Christ and live Christ, we must know Him as our pattern and take Him as our pattern, take Christ's mind as our mind, and know the Son's submission.

We must redeem the time to enjoy Christ as the supreme preciousness of God so that we can be constituted with Him to be men of preciousness as His personal treasure; as we live in His precious presence, enjoying Him as our portion, even as He enjoys us as His treasure, He builds Himself into us to make us His spiritual house and His holy and royal priesthood for the accomplishment of His heart's desire.

We need to know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we might know Him who is true and know that we are in Him who is true, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God; this is the true God and eternal life.

HWMR: EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (3) (Week 1)

Christ as Our Virtues, the Peace of God, Our Secret, and the One Who Empowers Us

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:5-9, 11b-13

- Phil 4:5 Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near.
- Phil 4:6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
- Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.
- Phil 4:8 Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.
- Phil 4:9 The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.
- Phil 4:11b ... for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.
- Phil 4:12 I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack.
- Phil 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

Day 1

Phil. 4:5-6 - Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near. In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

I. The **virtues of Christ** for our experience in Philippians 4:5-9 are the **expression of a life that lives Christ**—1:19-21a; 2:5-13; 3:8-10:

- Paul considers **forbearance** and the **lack of anxiety** as the first two aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ.
- Anxiety**, coming from Satan, is the sum total of human life and **disturbs** the believers' life of living Christ; **forbearance**, coming from God, is the sum total of a **life that lives Christ**; the two are opposites—Matt. 6:22-34.

It is easy to teach this, but it is quite difficult to practice it. To live in this way requires **grace**. When a brother's wife is angry with him, it is very easy for him to be stirred up. He may bristle with anger, and his emotions may boil over. At such a time it is extremely difficult to calm down and be tranquil. For this, we need the Lord's grace. It takes much grace to be **forbearing** in this kind of situation. But if we **exercise to be calm** by the Lord's grace, the atmosphere will eventually become tranquil. Then there will come a proper time to speak a calm word.

When we live Christ, knowing that **He is near**, we should let others know our forbearance, our moderation. Again I say, this is the first aspect of the expression of a life which lives Christ. Be assured that **whenever you live Christ, you will show forth such a forbearance**, such a moderate and tranquil attitude. But when you are striving in rivalry for vainglory or when you are murmuring or reasoning, you do not have this forbearance. This lack of forbearance proves that you are not living Christ. The first test of our living Christ is whether or not we **express forbearance**.

Paul had no intention to be like Confucius in teaching us to be patient and to bear difficulties. The factor which motivated him to write these verses was his **desire to show the expression of a life that lives Christ**. Thus, in 4:5-9 we see a picture of a life that lives Christ. If we are living Christ, we should let others know our forbearance. They should see that we are calm, tranquil, and moderate and that nothing can disturb our inward calm. However, when we are not calm, we surely are not in Christ. Then in our experience the Lord is not near. Instead of calm, we may have anxiety, which destroys our tranquillity and causes us to lose the inward peace. Whenever we lose our tranquillity, we are unable to live Christ. It is not possible to fight with others or to argue and at the same time to live Christ. **Living Christ requires absolute tranquillity, absolute calm.** (*Life Study of Philippians, chapter 27*)

Day 2

Phil. 1:21 - For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain

Phil. 4:5 - Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near

Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul goes on to say, “The Lord is near.” As I have indicated, I do not oppose the understanding that this refers to the nearness of the Lord’s coming. Nevertheless, according to experience, not according to doctrine, I would say that this word refers to the Lord’s presence with us today. It also strengthens Paul’s exhortation that we make our forbearance known to all men. **Because the Lord is near, we have no excuse for not making known our forbearance.** Often we fail to exercise forbearance because we forget that the Lord is near. We do not even remember that He is actually within us. When a brother’s wife serves him a cold drink instead of a hot one, will he care for the drink or for the Lord? If he cares about the drink instead of the Lord, then in his experience only the drink will be at hand, for the Lord will be far away. Because we do not realize that the Lord is near, we do not exercise forbearance. Instead, we are strict in dealing with others and make exacting demands of them without considering their situation. The more we realize the nearness of the Lord, the more satisfied we shall be and the more we shall be considerate of others and sweetly reasonable regarding their situation. If we realize that the Lord is near, we shall **turn from the old creation to the new creation**, to the out-resurrection, which is expressed as forbearance. (*Life Study of Philippians, chapter 56*)

Day 3

Phil. 1:19-20 - For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

II. “Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near”—Phil. 4:5:

A. According to Christian experience, **forbearance is all-inclusive**, for it includes all Christian virtues; forbearance is actually the **all-inclusive Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit** with His bountiful supply—1:19-21a:

1. Forbearance is **reasonableness, considerateness, and consideration** in dealing with others, without being strict in claiming one's legal rights; forbearance means that we are **easily satisfied**, even with less than our due:
 - a. Forbearance includes **love, patience, kindness, humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness**, a **willingness to yield**; if we have such an all-inclusive virtue, we will also have **righteousness** and **holiness**.
 - b. Forbearance also includes **self-control, moderation, gentleness, understanding, sympathy, wisdom, mercy, peacefulness, looking to the Lord**, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things—cf. 2 Cor. 12:7-9.
2. A forbearing person is one who always **fits in**, whose behavior is always **suitable**—cf. 6:1a; 10:1; Phil. 1:19; Isa. 11:2:
 - a. If we are forbearing, we will have the **wisdom and the ability** to supply others with what they need; we will also have the **full knowledge** of what to say to them and when to say it—50:4-5; Col. 1:28; Prov. 25:15.
 - b. To be forbearing is to **consider how others will be affected** by what we do or say—2 Chron. 1:10.
- B. As an all-inclusive virtue, **forbearance is Christ Himself**; since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance—Phil. 1:21a:
 1. To let our forbearance be known to all men is to **let the Christ** whom we live and magnify, whom we take as our pattern and pursue as our goal, **be known to all men**.
 2. **Only the Lord Jesus** lived a life full of forbearance, and **only Christ** can be our perfect forbearance today—Luke 24:15-19, 28-31; Matt. 17:24-27; John 11:20-34.
 3. To make known our forbearance is to **live a life that expresses Christ** as the totality of all human virtues.
 4. Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul says that the **Lord is near** (Phil. 4:5); with respect to **space**, the Lord is **near us, ready to help**; with regard to **time**, the Lord is **at hand, coming soon** (cf. Rom. 10:8-13); the Lord's being near primarily refers to His **presence** with us (Matt. 1:23; Exo. 33:14).
- C. We need to learn **Christ as the secret** (Phil. 4:12) of being transformed, that is, of being metabolically changed in our natural life, in any kind of environment, situation, or circumstance; this practical and simple secret is in verses 6 and 7—“In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”

Day 4

Phil. 4:6-7 - In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

III. “When we have problems in our daily life, we do not have to seek advice from others, because we have a spirit in us and the Lord as the Spirit dwelling in our spirit is very near to us. We can ask Him about everything, without any need to use the telephone or the fax machine, for He can talk with us right within us. You can talk with Him and confer with Him in everything. The Lord's Word says, ‘In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God’ (Phil. 4:6). Hence, if you have some problem, you just need to tell Him. He is

right within you, and He is with you face to face. The Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is in us not to trouble us but to be our Paraclete, Comforter, and Supporter. I always pray, ‘O Lord, now I am going to take a walk. Support me, sustain me, and strengthen me.’ This is to drink the Lord. In this way I have no anxiety. When anxiety comes, you should say, ‘O Lord, this anxiety is Yours, not mine; I give it to You because You bear it for me.’ Thus, you receive the Lord’s element into you, and metabolism will work constantly in you. Consequently, what is expressed through you outwardly is Christ. This is to live Christ. Those who do not know this secret consider that to live Christ is a difficult thing. Actually, you just need to practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, you will live Christ”—*The Organic Aspect of God’s Salvation*, pp. 54-55:

- A. **Christ Himself is the peace of God**, which surpasses every man’s understanding—Phil. 4:7; Isa. 9:6; John 14:27; Luke 7:50; Rom. 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 15:13; 16:20.
- B. The words *in everything* refer to the many different things that happen to us day by day; **prayer is general**, having worship and fellowship as its essence; **petition is special**, being for particular needs; both our prayer and our petition should be accompanied by our **giving thanks** to the Lord—Phil. 4:6.
- C. *To God* denotes motion toward, in the sense of a **living union and communion**, implying **fellowship**; hence, the sense of *to God* here is “in the fellowship with God”—v. 6.
- D. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that **we enjoy the peace of God**; the peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9) infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer, as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).
- E. The God of peace **patrols before our hearts and thoughts** in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil (Isa. 30:15a); if we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been **assigned to us by God** in order to serve us in fulfilling our destiny to **gain** Christ, **live** Christ, and **magnify** Christ (Rom. 8:28-30; Matt. 10:29-31; 2 Cor. 4:15-18).

Day 5

Phil. 4:8-9 - Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things. The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

IV. “Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things”— Phil. 4:8:

- A. These virtues are the **expressions** of God’s attributes **lived out** from within the **pursuers of Christ**, who is the embodiment of God.
- B. These virtues are **six governing aspects** of a life that lives Christ:
 1. A life that lives Christ is **true**—ethically truthful, without any pretense or falsehood.
 2. A life that lives Christ is **dignified**—honorable, noble, grave, solid, weighty, and worthy of reverence—1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2; cf. Rom. 9:21.
 3. A life that lives Christ is **righteous**—right before God and man—Phil. 3:9.
 4. A life that lives Christ is **pure**—single in intention and action, without any mixture—Matt. 5:8.

5. A life that lives Christ is **lovely**—lovable, agreeable, and endearing.
 6. A life that lives Christ is **well spoken of**—renowned, of good repute, attractive, winning, and gracious—Hosea 14:7.
- C. Virtue and praise are a **summing up of the six foregoing items**, in all of which are some virtue or excellence and something worthy of praise—Matt. 5:16.
- D. To be a proper human being is to **express God through His divine attributes in our human virtues**, to have a human life filled with Christ as the reality of the attributes of God— cf. Gen. 1:26.

Day 6

Phil. 4:11-13 - *Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.*

V. “I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me”—Phil. 4:11b-13:

- A. Paul took **Christ as the secret** to experience Christ, being **content** and **rejoicing** in every kind of circumstance, in any situation, and in any matter **because of Christ**—v. 4.
- B. *I have learned the secret* literally means “**I have been initiated**”; the metaphor here refers to a person’s being initiated into a secret society with instruction in its rudimentary principles—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:3-4; 5:32:
 1. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was **initiated into Christ** and **into the Body of Christ**—Acts 9:3-19, 25-28; 22:6-21; 13:1-4.
 2. Paul learned the secret of how to **take Christ as life** (Col. 3:4), how to **live Christ** (Phil. 1:21a), how to **magnify Christ** (v. 20), how to **gain Christ** (3:8, 12), and how to have the **church life** (1:8, 19; 2:1-4, 19-20; 4:1-3).
 3. The secret in Philippians 4 is **to do all things in Christ as the One who empowers us** (v. 13; *Hymns*, #564); as a person in Christ, Paul experienced Christ and applied Him in all circumstances (Phil. 3:9); this Christ is real, living, near, available, and prevailing (4:5b; *Hymns*, #539).
 4. Paul’s word about Christ as the empowering One specifically applies to **Christ’s empowering us to live Him** as our human virtues and thereby to **magnify Him** in His unlimited greatness in every kind of circumstance—Phil. 4:8-13.
 5. By the empowering of Christ, we can live a **contented life** and **be true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and well spoken of** (vv. 11-12, 8); to live a life of these virtues is much more difficult than doing a Christian work.
 6. If we would experience Christ as the empowering One, we need to **cooperate with Him** in the following matters:
 - a. In our practical living on the earth, we must be **persons who pray continually** by **coming** before God, **entering** into Him, and **living** in the light of His face—Psa. 42:5, 11; 80:1, 3, 7, 19.
 - b. We need to experience a **thorough and fresh forgiveness of our sins**, based on the shedding of the Lord’s blood on the cross—Heb. 9:14; 10:19, 22; Exo. 24:8; Matt. 26:28.

- c. We need to **know** what **ascension** is and **know** that the life we have received is a **heavenly life**; we should be aware of the fact that **we have ascended into the heavens with the Lord** and are thus heavenly persons; outwardly, we are still living on the earth, but inwardly, with respect to our **inner life** and mood, **we are living in the heavens**—Eph. 2:6; Heb. 8:1-2; 4:14-15; 7:25-26.

Forbearance is related to **rejoicing** in the Lord. In 4:4 Paul says, “*Rejoice in the Lord always.*” Immediately after this he says, “*Let your forbearance be known to all men*” (v. 5). If we **do not** rejoice in the Lord, we will **not be able** to forbear. If we would make known our forbearance, we need to be happy and joyful in the Lord. Those who are sad or sorrowful cannot have forbearance. Instead, they find it easy to be upset, to complain, or to lose their temper. The forbearance in verse 5 is the issue, the result, of the rejoicing in the Lord mentioned in verse 4. From experience we know that **rejoicing and forbearing go together**.

To **rejoice** in the Lord is **to be one with Him**. When we are one with the Lord, we are not anxious about anything, for we are not only **under the Lord's sovereign** hand but also **in the Lord Himself**. If we live this kind of life, how could we be anxious? The more we practice being one with the Lord, the more we will realize that His destiny is our destiny. If He wants us to stay on earth for a longer period of time, He will keep us alive. But if it is His desire that we go to Him, He will take us to Himself. Since everything depends on His will and since we are one with Him in a practical way, there is no reason for us to be anxious.

When we are **separated** from the Lord, we are **anxious** about everything. Everything in human life gives rise to anxiety, but when we are one with the Lord, we are separated from the natural human life and its anxiety. If we would make our forbearance known to all men and not be anxious in anything, we need to **practice being one with the Lord**. This is the reason Paul charges us to rejoice in the Lord before he exhorts us to make known our forbearance.

Even though Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he was **not anxious about anything**, because he was **one with the Lord actually, practically, and thoroughly**. He could even say that to die was better than to live. Paul was so one with the Lord that he knew that the Lord was his destiny. Not only was Paul's destiny in the hand of the Lord—his destiny was the Lord Himself. Because Paul was one with the Lord, he knew that Satan could not do anything to him, even though he might send a messenger, a thorn in the flesh, to buffet him. Paul was not worried about what Satan might do, for the Lord was his destiny.

Paul had learned the **secret** of being able to do all things in the One who empowered him. In verse 4 he exhorts us to **rejoice in the Lord always**. We may think that it is easy to rejoice in the Lord. Actually, rejoicing in Him requires the out-resurrection. In order to rejoice in the Lord, we need to be in Him as the One who empowers us. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament: Experiencing, Enjoying, and Expressing Christ, Volume 2, chapter 351*)