

HWMR: EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (3) (Week 2)

Knowing and Taking Christ as Our Pattern

Scripture Reading: Phil. 2:5-11

Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,
Phil 2:6 Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped,
Phil 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;
Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.
Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
Phil 2:11 And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Day 1

Phil. 2:5-8 - Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.

I. In order to experience Christ and live Christ, we must know Him as our pattern and take Him as our pattern—Phil. 2:5-11:

- A. In 2:5-11 Paul presents Christ as the pattern; we need to have this pattern infused into us.
- B. The pattern of the Christian life is the God-man Savior who emptied Himself and humbled Himself and who has been exalted and glorified by God—vv. 6-9:
 1. Although the Lord was equal with God, He did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped and retained; He emptied Himself, laying aside what He possessed—the form of God—vv. 6-7a.
 2. In His incarnation the Lord did not alter His divine nature; He changed only His outward expression from the form of God to the form of a slave—v. 7.
 3. The Lord became “in the likeness of men”—vv. 7b-8a:
 - a. *The form of God* implies the inward reality of Christ’s deity; *the likeness of men* denotes the outward appearance of His humanity.
 - b. He appeared to men as a man outwardly, but as God, He had the reality of deity inwardly.
 - c. Christ entered into the condition of humanity, and He was found in fashion as a man.
4. Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient even unto death—the death of the cross—v. 8b:
 - a. Humbling Himself was a further step in emptying Himself.
 - b. Christ’s self-humbling manifested His self-emptying.
 - c. The death of the cross was the climax of Christ’s humiliation—Acts 8:33; Phil. 3:21.
5. The Lord humbled Himself to the uttermost, but God exalted Him to the highest peak and bestowed on Him “the name which is above every name”—2:9:

- a. God has exalted Jesus, a real man, to be the **Lord of all**—Acts 2:32-33; 5:31.
- b. This **exaltation** of Christ was the **manifestation of resurrection power**.
- c. The highest name in the universe, the greatest name, is the **name of Jesus**:
 - (1) The name is the expression of the sum total of **what the Lord Jesus is in His person and work**.
 - (2) *In the name of Jesus* means in the sphere and element of **all that the Lord is**—Phil. 2:10.
- d. The result of our confessing that Jesus is Lord is that **God the Father is glorified**; this is the great end of all that Christ is and has done in His person and work—v. 11; 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

C. The principle of this pattern is that someone with the highest life and position would be **willing to live in a lowly way**.

The pattern presented in these verses is now the **life within us**. This life is what we call a **crucified life**. The seven steps of Christ's humiliation are all aspects of the crucified life. Although Christ had the expression of deity, **He laid aside** this expression. However, He did not lay aside the reality of His deity. He laid aside the higher form, the form of God, and **took on a much lower form**, the **form of a slave**. In this, **He emptied Himself**. Surely this is a mark of a crucified life. Then, after becoming a man and being found in the **appearance of a man**, **Christ humbled Himself** even unto the death of the cross. This was the crucified life lived out in a full and absolute way.

Christ is not only an outward pattern for us; He is also the life within us. As this inner life, He would have us **experience Him and thereby live a crucified life**. In this crucified life there is no room for rivalry, vainglory, or self-exaltation. On the contrary, there is **self-emptying and self-humbling**. Whenever we experience Christ and live Christ, we automatically live such a crucified life. This means that when we live Christ, we live the One who is the pattern of a crucified life. Then we also will empty ourselves and humble ourselves. (*Conclusion of the New Testament, vol. 2, Message 347*)

Day 2

Phil. 2:12-13 - *So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.*

II. Christ as our pattern is not only **objective** but also **subjective and experiential**—

Phil. 2:5, 12-13:

- A. The One who set up the pattern and who Himself is the pattern is **now operating within us as the indwelling God**—v. 13.
- B. The principle of Christ as the inward pattern for our living is that even if we have the highest standard or the highest position, **we should not grasp it**.
- C. **We need to be partners with Christ in His human living**, especially in His emptying and humbling Himself and in His not grasping equality with God as a treasure—vv. 6-7.

God who operates in us is actually the **Spirit of Jesus Christ** (1:19). It is only by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ that we can take Christ as our pattern. We need to praise the Lord that the Spirit of Jesus Christ is in us. By the Spirit of Jesus Christ we can be **as humble as Jesus was**, and by the Spirit of Jesus Christ **we can consider one another more excellent than ourselves**. When we do things out of rivalry or in competition with others, the Spirit of Jesus Christ is not expressed, but when we consider one another more excellent than ourselves, we enjoy the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Christ as the pattern is in us, living Himself out from within us as the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Christ is not only our pattern but also our life. We have within us a **life** that never insists on being anything but **always empties itself, takes a lower place, and humbles itself**. We need to enjoy Christ as such a life within us.

Another reason for saying that the pattern is subjective as well as objective is related to the fact that the book of Philippians is a book on the experience of Christ. Anything that is a matter of spiritual experience must be **subjective**. Based upon this principle and upon the context of the book of Philippians as a whole, Christ as the pattern is not only objective, but also subjective and experiential. (Life Study of Philippians, message 10)

Day 3

Col. 3:4 - When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

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 of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- D. The Christ who is our pattern is **now the life within us**—Col. 3:4:
 1. We have a life in us that is a **self-emptying** and **self-humbling life**; this life never grasps at something as a treasure but is **always willing to lay aside position and title**.
 2. We have Christ crucified as our pattern, and this pattern is the **crucified life within us**—Gal. 2:20:
 - a. The steps of Christ's humiliation in Philippians 2:5-8 are all aspects of the crucified life lived out in a full way.
 - b. When we live Christ, we live the One who is the pattern of a crucified life—1:21a.
 3. Taking the crucified life as our pattern opens the gate for resurrection and **brings us into the power of resurrection**—3:10:
 - a. By living a crucified life, we can experience the power of resurrection that exalted Christ to the highest peak in the universe—Eph. 1:19-22.
 - b. The **highest life on earth is the crucified life**; whenever we live a crucified life, God will bring us into the power of resurrection.
 4. **Christ should be exalted** not only **objectively** in the universe but also **subjectively** in our daily life—Phil. 2:9:
 - a. Christ is exalted in us when we take Him as the crucified life to be the pattern of our daily life.
 - b. The bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the power that exalts Christ— 1:19.

III. If we would take Christ as our pattern, we need to **take Christ's mind as our mind**—2:5:

- A. Paul not only took Christ as his living and expression outwardly but also **took the mind of Christ as his mind inwardly**—1 Cor. 2:16.

- B. For the mind of Christ to be in us means that this mind is **something living**; actually, the mind of Christ is **Christ Himself**, for the person of Christ is manifested in His mind.
- C. We need to **open ourselves** and **let** “this mind” be in us—Phil. 2:5:
 - 1. This refers to the considering in verse 3 and to the regarding in verse 4.
 - 2. This kind of thinking was in Christ when **He emptied Himself**, taking the form of a slave, and **humbled Himself**, being found in fashion as a man—vv. 7-8.
 - 3. To have such a mind requires us to be **one with Christ in His inward parts**—1:8.

In Philippians 2 we see that we should **live a crucified life** so that we may enjoy the power of resurrection. We should take the crucified life in verses 5 through 8 as our pattern so that we can experience the power of resurrection, which exalted Christ to the highest peak in the universe (v. 9). Both the experience of Christ as the pattern of a crucified life and the experience of the resurrection power that exalts Him are endless. Day by day we need to live a crucified life. This is to live Christ as our pattern. Instead of having a life of rivalry and vainglory, **we should live a life of self-emptying and self-humbling**. This is to live a crucified life. By means of this life, we are ushered into the power of resurrection by which Christ is exalted.

There is an urgent need among us the believers to experience Christ as our pattern. We desperately need to experience Him as our crucified life. Such a life stands altogether in contrast to a life of rivalry and vainglory. In the church life we either take the crucified life as our pattern or automatically live a life of rivalry and vainglory. **There is no third way**. If we do not take the crucified life as our pattern, we will automatically live in the way of rivalry and vainglory. The issue here is extremely serious. We need to be honest with ourselves and consider the kind of life we have been living in the church. Whenever we do not take the crucified life as our pattern, we are living a life of rivalry and vainglory.

The **highest life on earth is the crucified life**, that is, Christ Himself as the One who emptied Himself and humbled Himself. Whenever we live a crucified life, God will bring us into the power of resurrection, and in this power we will be exalted. Furthermore, **none of us in the church life should hold to any personal standing**. We must stand firm for the Lord’s testimony, yet we should not claim any standing, title, or position for ourselves. Making such claims will never bring us into the power of resurrection. We need to take the crucified life as our pattern. Eventually, we will enter into the power of resurrection where we experience God’s exaltation. Instead of seeking glory for ourselves, we should seek Christ and Him alone; then we will experience the crucified life. (Conclusion of the New Testament, vol. 2, Message 347)

Day 4

Phil. 2:6 - Who, existing in the **form of God**, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped.

John 14:28 - ...I am going away and I am coming to you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

IV. We need to know the Son’s submission—2:5-11; Heb. 5:7-8:

- A. The Word of God tells us that the **Lord Jesus and the Father are one**—John 10:30.
- B. The Father and the Son are **equal, equipotent, coexisting, and existing simultaneously**.
- C. **Philippians 2:5-7** forms one section, and verses 8 through 11 form another section:
 - 1. The **first section** is on **Christ emptying Himself**.
 - 2. The **second section** is on **Christ humbling Himself in His humanity**—v. 8.
- D. When the Lord came to the earth, He **emptied Himself** of the **glory, power, position, and image** of His deity.

E. The **Father** became the representation of **authority**, and the **Son** became the representation of **submission**:

1. When the Lord **came down** to the earth, He **dropped authority** on the one hand and **picked up submission** on the other hand.
2. He set His heart to become a **slave**, to be **restricted** in time and space as a man.
3. The Lord **humbled Himself**, becoming obedient; the **obedience in the Godhead** is the most wonderful thing in the whole universe.

Day 5

Heb. 5:8-9 - Even though He was a Son, [He] learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.

Rom. 1:5 - Through whom we have received grace and apostleship unto the **obedience of faith** among all the Gentiles on behalf of His name.

Day 6

Phil. 2:9-11 - Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that in the **name of Jesus** every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should openly confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord** to the glory of God the Father.

F. We should submit to authority; this is a great matter.

G. We need to have the mind in us which was **in Christ Jesus**—v. 5:

1. All of us should take **the way of our Lord**, taking His principle of submission as our principle of submission.
2. Whoever knows this principle will realize that no sin is uglier than rebellion and that **nothing is more important than submission**—Jude 11; Rom. 1:5; 16:26.
3. Only when we **see the principle of submission** can we **serve God**—Matt. 4:10; 20:28; Acts 6:2; Rom. 1:9; 16:18; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 22:3.
4. God's principle can be **maintained only by submitting** in the way that the Lord submitted.

H. **Hebrews 5:8** tells us that the Lord's obedience was **learned through suffering**:

1. Suffering brought obedience to Him.
2. **True submission** is found when **there is still obedience in spite of suffering**.
3. When the Lord came to the earth, He did not bring obedience with Him; rather, **He learned it through sufferings**.

I. **Salvation** not only brings **joy**; it also brings **submission**—Rom. 1:5; 16:19, 26; Titus 3:1:

1. Only the **submissive ones** will experience the **fullness of salvation**.
2. **We need to be submissive**, even as the Lord was submissive.
3. The Lord became the **source of our salvation through obedience**—Heb. 5:8-9.
4. God saved us with the hope that **we would submit to His will**—Rev. 4:11.

J. When one meets God's authority, submission is a simple matter, and knowing God's will is also a simple matter, because the Lord, who was submissive throughout His life, **has already given us His life of submission**—John 11:25.

Knowing Authority

We all know that in the service of the Body the first thing is coordination, and the second thing is authority. Some people think that authority pertains to only a few, such as apostles or elders—special kinds of people with authority. However, this is not the authority we refer to. We are referring to the **authority in the Body**. On the one hand, the **head is the only authority of all the members** of our physical body. Besides the head, no other member can exercise authority over the other members. On the other hand, **every member has a member to which it submits**, and at the same time **every member also exercises authority over some other members**. A hand has to submit to the authority of the arm, and at the same time this hand is also the authority over many fingers. Therefore, the fingers are under the authority of the hand, the hand is under the authority of the arm, and the arm is under the authority of the shoulder. However, the shoulder can only be the authority to the arms, the hands, and the fingers. It has no way to be the authority to the legs. It is the same way in the service in the Body of Christ.

Knowing Our Position

If we have been **dealt with properly before the Lord** and have **properly learned our position**, we will know who is before us as our authority and who is behind us—the ones to whom we are the authority. In a family with five siblings, does the family have to vote for someone to be the eldest brother, the second, and so on? There is no need to vote to see who is to be the oldest brother or who is to be the second. When we are placed among the brothers and sisters, immediately we know our seniority and position among them.

The life of the Lord is not an individualistic life but the **Body life**. In God's ordination we are all members. Since we are members, we cannot escape being in **coordination** with others. Since we are in the coordination, how can there not be someone over us as our authority? Suppose an arm says, "The body imprisons me. I would like to escape so that I will not have to submit to its authority." If this arm escapes, it will surely die. You may feel comfortable if I shook your hand. However, if I cut off my hand and placed it on you, would you feel so comfortable? When a member is **severed** from the body, it becomes something **dreadful** and becomes altogether **useless**.

The Proper Service in Coordination— Having No Self and Not Being Independent

As Christians in the Body **we should know who is our authority**. When we are serving in the church, there are some brothers and sisters whom we may not have to take heed to, but there are others whom we cannot disregard. The hand may contend with the ear and the nose. As a matter of fact, it may argue with almost any member and still be all right, but there is one member with whom it may not dispute—the arm. Once it has a conflict or a dispute with the arm, it is finished. Who is our authority? **Others cannot decide for us**. **We know it in our heart**. Once we know who our authority is, we have **no choice but to submit**. Perhaps two brothers who are neither elders nor deacons are our authority. We still have to submit to them. This is the authority in the coordination of the church service. **The greatest problem in the church is our independence**. The requirement in the church service is coordination. Therefore, in the church service we should not be in the self, nor should we be independent. Only then can we have normal service in coordination. (*Being Apt to Teach and Holding the Mystery of the Faith, Chapter 5*)

