

HWMR - THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST, Week 4

Abiding in Christ as the Empowering One— the Secret of Experiencing Christ

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:12-13; John 14:23; 15:4-5; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:24; 4:13; Rev. 21:3, 22

- Philippians 4:12 - I know also how **to be based**, 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.
- Philippians 4:13 - **I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.**
- John 14:23 - Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone **loves Me**, he will **keep My word**, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and **make an abode with him.**
- John 15: 4 - **Abide in Me** and **I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
- John 15: 5 - I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for **apart from Me you can do nothing.**
- 1 John 2:27 - And as for you, the **anointing** which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.
- 1 John 2:28 - And now, little children, **abide in Him**, so that if He is manifested, we may have boldness and not be put to shame from Him at His coming.
- 1 John 3:24 - And he who keeps His commandments **abides in Him**, and **He in him.** And in this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He gave to us.
- 1 John 4:13 - In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit.
- Revelation 21: 3 - And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, **the tabernacle of God is with men**, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.
- Revelation 21:22 - And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

BEING IN CHRIST

In Philippians 4 Paul says that he had **learned the secret** both **to abound** and **to lack** (v. 12). **In** everything and **in** all things he had learned the secret. Paul could declare, "**I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me**" (v. 13). Thus, at the end of the book of Philippians, **we find a man who could do everything in Christ.**

The secret of doing all things is to be in Christ. John 15:5 affords a contrast to this. In this verse the Lord said, "**Apart from Me you can do nothing.**" Therefore, Philippians 4:13 says that we can do all things in Him, and John 15:5 says that apart from Him we can do nothing. We all need to learn to say, "**Apart from Him I can do nothing, but in Him I can do all things.**" The secret is to be in Him. (The Experience of Christ, Chapter 23, Section 1)

Day 1

I. We need to learn the secret of being in Christ as the empowering One:

- A. In Philippians 4:12-13 Paul says, "*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*":
 1. The phrase **learned the secret** indicates that Paul had **come into** a new situation, a new environment; whenever we are put in a new environment, **we need to learn the secret of living in that environment**:
 - a. 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.
 - b. After Paul was converted to Christ, **he was initiated into Christ** and into the Body of Christ.
 - c. He then **learned the secret** of how to take Christ as life, how to live Christ, how to magnify Christ, how to gain Christ, and how to have the church life, all of which things are rudimentary principles.
 2. **In everything** means in each matter; **in all things** means in all matters; together, these two phrases encompass all the things in the course of human life.
 3. Paul **learned the secret** of experiencing Christ **in** everything and **in** every place; this is also the secret of having **more of Christ accumulated within us.**

The basic **principles of the church life** are altogether different from the basic **principles of the world**. We may know all the rudimentary principles of the world and **yet not know anything of the church life**. Thus, when we are saved and come into the church, the Body of Christ, **we need to be initiated by learning certain basic principles**. The secret of the Body is to **take Christ as our life, to live Christ, to pursue Christ, to gain Christ, to magnify Christ, and to express Christ**. These are the basic principles of the church, the Body of Christ. As one who had been initiated into the Body, Paul had learned the secret. (Life-Study of Philippians, Chapter 29, Section 1)

Day 2

4. The secret is in Philippians 4:13: *"I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me"*:
 - a. Paul was a **man in Christ** (2 Cor. 12:2), and he desired to **be found in Christ** by others; now he declared that he was able to **do all things in Him**, the very Christ who empowered him:
 - (1) This is an all-inclusive and concluding word on his experience of Christ; it is the converse of the Lord's word in John 15:5 concerning our organic relationship with Him: *"Apart from Me you can do nothing."*
 - (2) The Greek word for empowers means "makes dynamic inwardly."
 - (3) **Christ dwells in us** (Col. 1:27); He empowers us, makes us dynamic from within, not from without; by such inward empowering Paul was able to **do all things in Christ**.
 - b. Paul had been altogether in the Jewish religion under the law and **had always been found by others in the law**, but at his conversion he was transferred from the law and his former religion into Christ and became **"a man in Christ"**—2 Cor. 12:2.
 - c. Now he expected to **be found in Christ** by all who observed him—the Jews, the angels, and the demons; this indicates that he aspired to have his whole being immersed in and saturated with Christ that all who observed him might find him fully in Christ; **only when we are found in Christ, will Christ be expressed and magnified**—Phil. 3:9a; 1:20.
- B. On the one hand, **by the empowering of Christ**, we can **live a contented life** (4:11-12); on the other hand, **by the empowering of Christ, we can be true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and well spoken of** (v. 8).
- C. 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; to live a life of these virtues is much more difficult than doing a Christian work.

GOD'S SOVEREIGN ARRANGEMENT OF OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

My reason for dwelling on this matter is to point out that **our circumstances** are always **sovereignly arranged by God**. Sometimes His sovereign arrangement puts us in a **low situation**, and at other times in circumstances that are **quite good**. Paul realized that even though the supply had come from the church at Philippi, **his circumstances were still in the hand of God**. In God's sovereign arrangement, the Philippian church did not send the supply until now. Perhaps they had the heart to send him a gift, but not the opportunity until Epaphroditus could come. When the opportunity was available, the Philippian believers sent a gift to Paul. This supply brought him out of the condition of humiliation, want, and abasement and set him on a peak. But he did not know how long that would last. Nevertheless, **he had the assurance that he knew both how to be abased and how to abound**, both how to abound and how to be in want. He had **learned the secret**; he had been initiated into the basic principles of Christ and the church.

In verse 13 we find a basic **principle** related to the apostle's secret **of sufficiency in Christ**: *"I can do all things in Him who empowers me."* Paul was **a person in Christ** (2 Cor. 12:2), and **he desired to be found in Christ** by others. Now he declared that **he could do all things in Him, in the very Christ who empowered him**. This is an all-inclusive and concluding word concerning his experience of Christ. It is the converse of the Lord's word concerning our organic relationship with Him in John 15:5: *"Apart from Me you can do nothing."* (Life-Study of Philippians, Chapter 29, Section 3)

Day 3

II. To learn the secret of being in Christ as the empowering One is to learn the secret of abiding in Christ; to abide in Christ is to dwell in Him, to remain in fellowship with Him, that we may experience and enjoy His abiding in us—John 15:4-5; 1 John 2:27:

- A. To **abide in Christ** is to **live in** the Divine Trinity—taking Christ as our dwelling place—vv. 6, 24, 27-28; 3:6, 24; 4:13:

1. To abide in Christ is to **abide in the Son** and in the Father (2:24); this is to remain and dwell in the Lord (John 15:4-5).
2. To abide in Christ is to **abide in the fellowship** of the divine life and to walk in the divine light, that is, to abide in the divine light—1 John 1:2-3, 6-7; 2:10.
- B. To have **Christ abiding in us** is to **live with** the Divine Trinity—having **Christ's presence as our enjoyment** for Him to be one with us and to be with every part of our being and every aspect of our living—Matt. 1:23; 18:20; 28:20; 2 Tim. 4:22; 2 Cor. 2:10; 1 Cor. 7:24:
 1. To have **Christ abiding in us** is to have **the words of Christ abiding in us** for the bearing of remaining fruit to glorify the Father—John 15:7-8, 16.
 2. To have **Christ abiding in us** is to have **the Spirit of reality as the presence** of the Triune God abiding in us—14:17.

Day 4

III. We need to abide in Christ as our King and as our royal abode so that He can abide in us to make us His queen and His royal palace, His glorious church—Psa. 45:13, 8; John 15:4-5; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 22:5; Rom. 5:17; cf. S. S. 6:4:

- A. To **abide in Christ** is to **dwell in Him**, the eternal God, as our Lord, having our **living in Him** and **taking Him** as our everything—John 15:4-5; 1 John 4:15-16; Rev. 21:22; Deut. 33:27a; Psa. 90.
- B. We need to dwell in God, living in Him every minute, for outside of Him there are sins and afflictions—vv. 3-11; John 16:33.
- C. To take God as our habitation, our eternal dwelling place, is the highest and fullest experience of God—Psa. 91.

IV. To abide in Christ, taking Him as our dwelling place, and to allow Him to abide in us, taking us as His dwelling place, is to live in the reality of the universal incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the redeemed and regenerated believers—John 14:2, 10-11, 17, 20, 23:

- A. The New Jerusalem is the **ultimate incorporation** of the processed and consummated Triune God **with** the regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified tripartite church—Rev. 21:3, 22.
- B. The New Jerusalem is the tabernacle of God, and the center of the tabernacle is Christ as the hidden manna; **the way to be incorporated** into this universal, divine-human incorporation, the mutual abode of God and man, **is to eat Christ as the hidden manna**—v. 3; Exo. 16:32-34; Heb. 9:4; Rev. 2:17.

The Gospel of John explains the issue of His glorification in chapter 14. This issue is the **universal incorporation**. **First**, the three of the Triune God were **incorporated from eternity**. In John 14:10 the Lord told Philip, *"I am in the Father and the Father is in Me."* This reveals that the three of the Divine Trinity are incorporated into **one incorporation** by Their **mutual coinhering**. Verse 10 of John 14 unveils to us **the beginning** of this universal incorporation in eternity. Verse 11 shows that the three are also an incorporation by Their mutual work. They work together as one.

One day the second of the Divine Trinity was sent by this incorporation. Acts 2:23 indicates that the three parties of this universal incorporation had a council (1 Pet. 1:20). In this council it was agreed **to send the second into time to become a man** (Micah 5:2). Before the incarnation this universal incorporation consisted of three parties. Then the second of the Divine Trinity **brought this divine incorporation into humanity**. His disciples always wondered, "Who is this man?" They talked secretly among themselves about Him, but they did not know who He was intrinsically. In John 14:20 the Lord told them that on the day of resurrection they would know that He was in the Father, that they were in Him, and that He was in them. **These three ins** reveal that the consummated Triune God and **the regenerated believers became an incorporation** in the resurrection of Christ.

In John 14 the Lord revealed that He came as the **first Comforter** and that another One would come as the **second Comforter**. The second Comforter is the reality of the first Comforter. He is **the Spirit of reality**, and verse 17 says that this Spirit of reality would **be in** the disciples. The **in** of verse 17 as a general statement is the totality of the **three ins** in verse 20 as a detailed statement. **When the Spirit of reality is in us, the totality of the Triune God is in us to incorporate us into the universal incorporation**. In **eternity** it was a divine incorporation. By being **enlarged**, this incorporation **became a divine and human incorporation**. This incorporation is the house of the Father, the universal vine tree of the Son, and the new man of the Spirit.

In John 16:12-15 the Lord told the disciples, *"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you. All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you."* The Spirit of reality declares all the things concerning Christ in the last twenty-two books of the New Testament, the Epistles. (The Issue of Christ Being Glorified by the Father with the Divine Glory, Chapter 5, Section 4)

The **three aspects** of the **universal incorporation** of the consummated God **with** the regenerated believers are revealed in John 14 through 16: a **house**, a **tree**, and a **child**. **John 16** shows the child born of the Spirit (v. 21). This child is Christ. Eventually, **this child becomes the new man**. In **Colossians 3** we are told that **Christ is this new man**. He is every member and is in every member of the new man (vv. 10-11). In God's eyes the house, the tree, and the man in John 14 through 16 are all Christ. Christ **is the house, the temple, the dwelling place of God**; Christ **is the vine tree**; and Christ **is the new man**. In the previous chapter we saw the Father's house. In this chapter we want to see the true vine and the new child, the new man. (The Issue of Christ Being Glorified by the Father with the Divine Glory, Chapter 5, Section 4)

V. We abide in Christ **so that** He may abide in us **by loving Him**—John 14:21, 23:

- A. When we **love** the Lord Jesus, He **manifests** Himself to us, and the Father comes with Him to **make an abode** with us for our enjoyment; this abode is a **mutual abode**, in which the Triune God abides in us and we abide in Him—v. 23.
- B. The more we **love** the Lord, the more we will have His **presence**, and the more we are in His presence, the more we will **enjoy** all that He is to us; **the Lord's recovery is a recovery of loving the Lord Jesus**—1 Cor. 2:9-10; Eph. 6:24.

The Triune God Making a Mutual Abode with the Believer

The Triune God **makes** a mutual abode with the believer. In verse 23 the Lord Jesus **does not say**, "The Father and I will abide with him," **but He says**, "*We will come to him and make an abode with him.*" There is a difference between the two expressions **abide with** and **make an abode with**. The difference is more than mere idiom in language. To say, "The Father and I will come to abide with him," **is correct** as far as language is concerned. But to say, "The Father and I will come to him and make an abode with him," **is more meaningful**. In what way is it more meaningful? In the way that **the Father and the Son will take the lover of Jesus as Their abode and that the believer will be an abode to Them**. The Lord seemed to be saying, "We shall make an abode with him that he and We may have an abiding place. He will be Our abode, and We shall be his abode."

This verse is the basis of 15:4-5—"Abide in Me and I in you." Most Christians do not realize that the basis of 15:4-5 is 14:23, where we have the **mutual abode** made **by** the appearing of the Father and the Son **as** the **Spirit** to the believer who loves Him. In other words, this abode is prepared by the **visitation** of the Triune God. When the Triune God grants you a visit, **His visitation makes you His abode and it makes Him your abode**. Eventually, **you and He, He and you, become a mutual abode**. You will abide in Him, and He will abide in you. This is marvelous. **He will not only be the One who abides in you, but He will also be your abode**. Although it is wonderful to have Him abide in us, I would rather **have Him as my abode**. We can abide in Him, and He can abide in us. In such a situation there is no place for sin, the world, Satan, the old man, or the flesh. All such things have been chased away.

I ask you to be honest and to consider your past experience. Have you not had this experience in the past? Deep within you there was a sweet appreciation toward the Lord Jesus and you said, "Lord, I love You." Then the Lord said, "Since you love Me, My commandment is that you do not do this and that." You said, "Amen, Lord Jesus." Perhaps you said amen with tears in your eyes. Immediately you had the sense of His manifestation within you. You were so much in His presence. At that time you had the sense that He was filling you up with Himself and that you were being drawn into Him. You were **abiding in Him**, and **He was abiding in you**. You were His abode, and He was yours. I believe that we all have had this kind of experience, either in a deep way or in a shallow way, either for a long time or for just a few minutes. We need to have this experience all day long. (Life-Study of John, Chapter 32, Section 4)

Day 5

VI. We abide in Christ **so that** He may abide in us **by caring for the inward teaching of the all-inclusive anointing**—1 John 2:27:

- A. **We abide** in the **divine fellowship** with Christ by **experiencing** the **cleansing of the Lord's blood** and the **application of the anointing Spirit** to our inner being—John 15:4-5; 1 John 1:5, 7; 2:20, 27.
- B. Christ as the Head is the **anointed One** and the **anointing One**, and we are His members enjoying Him as the **inner anointing** for the fulfillment of His purpose—Heb. 1:9; 3:14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22.
- C. The **anointing**, as the **moving** and **working** of the compound Spirit within us, anoints God into us so that we may be **saturated** with God, **possess** God, and **understand** the mind of God; the anointing communicates the mind of Christ as the Head of the Body to His members by the inner sense, the inner consciousness, of life—Psa. 133; 1 Cor. 2:16; Rom. 8:6, 27.
- D. When the Head wants a member of the Body to move, He **intimates** it **through** the inner anointing, and as **we yield** to the anointing, **life flows freely from the Head to us**; if **we resist** the anointing, our relationship with the Head is interfered with, and the flow of life within us is stopped—Col. 2:19.
- E. The **teaching of the anointing of the Spirit** has nothing to do with right or wrong; it **is an inner sense of life**—Acts 16:6-7; 2 Cor. 2:13.
- F. If our **natural life is dealt with** by the cross and if we **submit to the headship of Christ** and **live the Body life**, **we will have the Spirit's anointing and enjoy the fellowship of the Body**—Eph. 4:3-6, 15-16.

Day 6

VII. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by “switching on” the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit—Rom. 8:2, 4:

- A. The Lord's abiding in us and our abiding in Him are altogether a matter of Him being the life-giving Spirit in our spirit; by the bountiful, immeasurable Spirit in our spirit, we know with full assurance that we and God are one and that we abide in each other—1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 1:19; John 3:34; 1 John 3:24; 4:13.
- B. The way to abide in Christ as the empowering One so that He may be activated within us as the inner operating God, the law of the Spirit of life, is by rejoicing always, praying unceasingly, and giving thanks in everything—Phil. 4:13; 2:13; 1 Thes. 5:16-18; Col. 3:17.

VIII. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by dealing with the constant word in the Scriptures, which is outside of us, and the present word as the Spirit, which is within us—John 5:39-40; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rev. 2:7:

- A. By the outward, written word we have the explanation, definition, and expression of the mysterious Lord, and by the inward, living word we have the experience of the abiding Christ and the presence of the practical Lord—Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18.
- B. If we abide in the Lord's constant and written word, His instant and living words will abide in us—John 8:31; 15:7; 1 John 2:14.
- C. We abide in Him and His words abide in us so that we may speak in Him and He may speak in us for the building of God into man and man into God—John 15:7; 2 Cor. 2:17; 13:3; 1 Cor. 14:4b.

To abide in Christ is to dwell in Him, to remain in fellowship with Him, that we may experience and enjoy His abiding in us (John 15:4-5; 1 John 2:27). To abide in Christ is to live in the Divine Trinity—taking Christ as our dwelling place (vv. 6, 24, 27-28; 3:6, 24; 4:13). To have Christ abiding in us is to have the Spirit of reality as the presence of the Triune God abiding in us (John 14:17). We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by caring for the inward teaching of the all-inclusive anointing (1 John 2:27). We abide in the divine fellowship with Christ by experiencing the cleansing of the Lord's blood and the application of the anointing Spirit to our inner being (John 15:4-5; 1 John 1:5, 7; 2:20, 27).

The Lord's abiding in us and our abiding in Him are altogether a matter of His being the life-giving Spirit in our spirit; by the bountiful, immeasurable Spirit in our spirit, we know with full assurance that we and God are one and that we abide in each other (1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 1:19; John 3:34; 1 John 3:24; 4:13). The way to abide in Christ as the empowering One so that He may be activated within us as the inner operating God, the law of the Spirit of life, is by rejoicing always, praying unceasingly, and giving thanks in everything (Phil. 4:13; 2:13; 1 Thes. 5:16-18; Col. 3:17). We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by dealing with the constant word in the Scriptures, which is outside of us, and the present word as the Spirit, which is within us (John 5:39-40; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rev. 2:7). By the outward, written word we have the explanation, definition, and expression of the mysterious Lord, and by the inward, living word we have the experience of the abiding Christ and the presence of the practical Lord (Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18). If we abide in the Lord's constant and written word, His instant and living words will abide in us (John 8:31; 15:7; 1 John 2:14). We abide in Him and His words abide in us so that we may speak in Him and He may speak in us for the building of God into man and man into God (John 15:7; 2 Cor. 2:17; 13:3; 1 Cor. 14:4b). (Conclusion of the New Testament, The (Msgs. 388-403), Chapter 7, Section 5)