

**HWMR: KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND ENJOYING CHRIST AS REVEALED IN
PHILIPPIANS, (Week 5)**

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

**KNOWING THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS AND BEING
CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH**

Philippians 3:7	But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
Philippians 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
Philippians 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,
Philippians 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;
Ephesians 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,
Ephesians 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,
Colossians 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;

Day 1

Philippians 3:10 - To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

2 Timothy 2:11 - Faithful is the word: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

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

- 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.
- 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.

Day 2

Colossians 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;

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.

- 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:
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.
 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):
 - 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.
 - 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:
 - (1) As the many grains, we also must **lose our soul-life** through death that we may enjoy eternal life in resurrection—v. 25.
 - (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.
 - (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.

Christ's **sufferings have accomplished two things**. First, His sufferings have accomplished **redemption**. Without suffering, Christ could not redeem us. Second, His sufferings have also accomplished the **producing and building up of the church**. Thus, within His great sufferings, there is a part for redemption and a part for the producing and building up of the church. The Lord Jesus was on the cross for six hours. Strictly speaking, only the **last three hours of His suffering on the cross were for redemption**. During these hours Christ became sin in the eyes of God, for God gathered all of man's sin, placed it upon Him, and condemned Him. That was the reason the Lord cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). Before He went to the cross, the Lord Jesus said that He was not alone, because the Father was with Him. But when He was made sin, He suffered God's judgment and condemnation. This was Christ's greatest suffering, and through it He accomplished redemption. It is impossible for us to share in this aspect of Christ's sufferings. If we say that we can share in this aspect, we blaspheme. **He alone suffered** God's judgment on the cross for the accomplishment of redemption.

However, Christ suffered not only for redemption but also for the **producing of the Body**. In the Gospel of John, Christ is described as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. But He is also presented as the **grain of wheat that fell into the ground to produce many grains**. The Lamb suffered for redemption, whereas the grain suffered for reproducing. Although we cannot share in Christ's sufferings for redemption, we can share in His sufferings for reproducing and for building up the Body. Christ was the one grain, and we are the many grains. As the many grains, we must suffer in the same way the one grain suffered. The one grain **did not complete all the sufferings** that are needed for the building up of the Body. For this, there is something lacking, and **the lack must be made up by you and me**. There is a portion for each of us to make up.

When we put ourselves aside and remain under the cross, the power of resurrection will be our portion. Immediately, opposition will rise up against us, and we will suffer. This suffering is in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ for the building up of the Body. (*The Experience of Christ, chapter 16*)

Day 3

2 Corinthians 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.

2 Corinthians 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.

- 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:
1. Paul's word in Philippians 3:10 **does not** refer to sufferings for **transformation**.
 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**.
 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.
 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.
 5. It is when we **suffer for the Body** that we experience the power of Christ's resurrection—Col. 1:24; Phil. 3:10.

Why does the Spirit groan in us with words which cannot be uttered? **He groans that we may be molded, conformed to the image of the Son of God.** It is much easier to speak about sanctification in life. However, accompanying sanctification is the matter of conformation. We not only need to be sanctified, to be saturated with what God is, but also to be **molded**. We may be separated from everything common and saturated with God's holy nature, but **still lack this conformity**. Sanctification probably does not require any suffering. Conformation, on the contrary, needs suffering. In sanctification there is no pattern, only a change in disposition, in nature, but in conformation there is a mold by which we are conformed to the image of God's Son. Along with this mold is the pressure and the molding and the mixing with water and the burning with fire. If the dough, the fine white flour, could speak, it would say, "What a suffering this is to me. You mix me with other things, you press me, and you even put me in an oven to burn me. The entire process of cooking is a suffering." That is correct. **Without suffering we cannot be molded into the pattern.**

Why do we groan? **Because we feel suffering and do not know how to pray.** It seems that the Holy Spirit gives you no utterance. You are ignorant, and the Holy Spirit in like manner seems to be ignorant. You do not know how to pray, and the Spirit also appears not to know how to pray. **The Spirit prays in your manner.** You groan, and He groans also. You groan with hardly any purpose, but the Spirit groans in your groaning with a **definite purpose**. This purpose cannot be uttered by you, but it can be uttered by the Spirit. However, if He would utter it, you would not understand, for it would be a divine, heavenly language. Since it is difficult for you to understand, the Spirit gives no utterance. He "intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Nevertheless, there is a purpose in it all.

What is the purpose? The Holy Spirit groans in your groaning **in order that you may be fully molded and conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son.** This is the purpose. When many saints encounter hardship they say, "I just don't know why this happens to me. Why does this happen to me?" I believe that we have all said this or asked this many times. Even you who have recently been saved perhaps have already spoken in this way. Why do certain things happen to you? Because the groaning Spirit prayed for them. Although you do not know the purpose, He knows, and He prays according to God. **Christ is the pattern**, and the Spirit prays that everything which happens to you will mold you into this pattern, into the image of the firstborn Son. (*Life-Study of Romans, chapter 20*)

Day 4

Philippians 3:10 - To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Romans 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,

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.
- B. Being conformed to Christ’s death indicates that **His death is a mold**—v. 10:
 - 1. The **center of Philippians 3** is the matter of being conformed to the mold of Christ’s death—vv. 7, 9, 12-16.
 - 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.
 - 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.

We are persons under the shadow of the cross of Christ. The **Christian life** is both a living life and a dying life. **We live, but we live in the mold of the death of Christ**. When the Lord Jesus lived on the earth, He was being crucified every day. Every day He lived a crucified life. We also can live such a life because we have the power of His resurrection. As we have seen, this power is the person of Christ, and Christ today is the Spirit of Jesus Christ who is in our spirit. **As we remain in our spirit**, we experience this power in the shadow of the death of Christ. Every day our spouse and children are the “shadows of death” to us. Our children may be very enjoyable to us at first. However, one day they may become shadows, and the more they grow, the darker the shadows may become. Eventually, our children will put us into the mold of the cross. We should simply remain there and say Hallelujah!

Not only are our **marriage life and family life the mold of the cross**, but even the **church life becomes the mold of the cross to us**. Certain saints may wonder why there are hardships in the “glorious church life,” and eventually the church life may not seem so glorious to them. Every brother and sister may seem to be a “dark shadow.” This may cause some to consider moving to a new locality. However, they may discover that the church in the locality to which they move is even darker. Furthermore, if they leave the church, their situation will become darker still. We have no place to which we may escape. **Every locality is a cross**. This is our destiny. We have been destined to pass through the cross. Only when we are in the New Jerusalem in the new heavens and new earth will we be out of the shadow of death. In the New Jerusalem there will be no night and no shadow. However, today there are shadows of the cross everywhere.

Praise the Lord that within us there is the power of resurrection. Paul said, “I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me” (Phil. 4:13). **The One who empowers us is the power of resurrection**. By Him we can live a life that expresses and magnifies Christ. (*The Experience and Growth in Life, chapter 12*)

Day 5

- Philippians 3:10* - To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- Galatians 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.
- John 6:57* - As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

- 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:
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.
 2. He always put His **human life to death** so that the **divine life** within Him could **flow out**—John 10:10b-11, 17.
 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.

Day 6

- Matthew 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.
- Romans 6:3-4* - Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 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.

- D. To be conformed to Christ's death is to **take Christ's death as the mold of our life**—v. 10:
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.
 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.
 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.
 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.
 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.
- 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.

We need to be conformed to the death of Christ because we are natural, of the old man, and of the self. In Christ's death the natural man is killed, the old man is crucified, and the self is nullified. The form of Christ's death does not bear any indication of the natural man, the old man, or the self. This means that as we are participating in Christ's death, His death will shape us, will conform us, to the form of His death. This shaping by Christ's death will deal with our natural life, our old man, and our self. This means that in Christ's death our natural man with the natural life, the old man, and the self are continually put to death. In Christ's death, therefore, there is not any activity of the natural life, of the old man, or of the self. However, if we behave in our natural man, in our old man, or in the self, we do not bear the image of the death of Christ. In order to bear this image, we need to be conformed to Christ's death.

We need to be impressed with the fact that Christ's death is a form, a mold, and that we are the "dough" that is placed into this mold. In the form, the mold, of Christ's death there is no natural man, old man, or self. All these are ruled out by the mold of the death of Christ. To be molded, formed, in this way is to be conformed to Christ's death. The more we experience this, the more we know Christ, His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament: The Believers, Volume 2, chapter 143*)