

HWMR: KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND LIVING THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE, (Week 1)

Scripture Reading: Eph. 3:8, 14-18; Phil. 3:3-16; Col. 1:15-18; 3:10-11

**BEING BROUGHT BACK TO CHRIST HIMSELF
FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE**

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Ephesians 3:8 | To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel |
| Ephesians 3:14 | For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, |
| Ephesians 3:15 | Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named, |
| Ephesians 3:16 | That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, |
| Ephesians 3:17 | That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, |
| Ephesians 3:18 | May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are |
| Philippians 3:3 | For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh, |
| Philippians 3:4 | Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more: |
| Philippians 3:5 | Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; |
| Philippians 3:6 | As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless. |
| 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, |
| Philippians 3:11 | If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead. |
| Philippians 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. |
| Philippians 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, |
| Philippians 3:14 | I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward. |
| Philippians 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. |
| Philippians 3:16 | Nevertheless whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk. |
| Colossians 1:15 | Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, |
| Colossians 1:16 | Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him. |
| Colossians 1:17 | And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him; |
| Colossians 1:18 | And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things; |
| Colossians 3:10 | And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, |
| Colossians 3:11 | Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all. |

Day 1

Philippians 3:7-8 - But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ. 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

I. We, believers in Christ and children of God, need to be freed from all distractions and brought back to Christ Himself—Eph. 3:8, 14-18; Col. 3:10-11:

- A. God wants Christ to be the **center** of all things and to have the **first place** in all things—Christ being all and in all—1:15-18.
- B. **Christ is wonderful**; He is the wonder of the entire universe, and every item of what Christ is, is wonderful—Isa. 9:6; Judg. 13:18; Eph. 3:8.
- C. **God's will**, which is His eternal purpose and desire in the universe, is that **Christ be everything to us and be wrought into us** as our life and everything—v. 17a.
- D. Paul wrote his Epistles because he was clear that **many good things**, such as doctrines, ethics, morality, teachings, and culture, **are distractions** from Christ—Phil. 3:4-8:
 - 1. The apostle Paul shows us that these things are not Christ Himself, and he indicates that if they **distract** us from Christ, they are **versus** Christ—1 Cor. 7:35.
 - 2. When we turn away from all distractions and **turn to Christ**, we will be **brought back** to Christ Himself so that we may know Christ, experience Christ, enjoy Christ, express Christ, and be constituted with Christ—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 3:9-10.

First, if you would see such a vision, you must have a **humble heart**, have an **open mind**, and be **poor in spirit**. You must hold a kind of attitude, aspiring for the Lord's mercy. Then you will see the vision. Learn to not reject even a little enlightenment. Just a little rejection covers your whole being. Be humble, be open, and be pure. Hold an attitude of needing and desiring the Lord's mercy. Then the light will come. We have given many messages through the years that Christ in God's economy is all in all. **Christ is the centrality and universality of God's economy**. Christ is the hub and Christ is the rim of God's purpose. Whatever God is, is just Christ. We all need to see this. I realize that you know this and you have heard this, but it must become a vision to you. You may know it but still not have a vision that Christ is all in all. When you see this, everything besides Christ drops.

Second, you have to realize that **Christ is everything in God's economy**. God has ordained us just to live by Christ. Christ is our **life**, Christ is our **breath**, Christ is our **breathing**. Christ is every little matter in our practical life. You have to see that you cannot live without Christ. If at any moment you and Christ are apart, you are dead. You cannot have life and live apart from Christ. Even though you have been regenerated, even though you have been strongly and thoroughly saved, you have to realize that once you are apart from Christ, you are dead. Why are Christians full of opinion? It is because we lack these two visions: that God does not want anything other than Christ with the church, and that God wants us to live by Christ. The Bible has over one thousand chapters, but you must realize that the crucial point, the critical point, the organic point, of the whole Bible is that you have to **live by Christ**. I realize that some of you have heard this many times. But it is one thing to hear it, and it is another thing to have it as a kind of dominating factor. (*Perfecting Training, chapter 6*)

Day 2

Philippians 3:9-10 - 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, To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

- E. In Philippians 3:3-16 **Christ** is presented as the **goal of the believers' pursuit**:
1. On account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul **counted all things to be loss**—v. 8a.
 2. Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them as **refuse** in order to **gain** Christ—vv. 7, 8b.
 3. Paul's earnest desire was to be **found in Christ**—v. 9.
 4. The necessary condition of being found in Christ is **not having our own righteousness** but the righteousness of God through faith in Christ—v. 9.
 5. Paul **aspired to know Christ**, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings—v. 10.
 6. In Philippians 3:10 Paul speaks of **being conformed to Christ's death**; this indicates that Paul desired to take Christ's death as the mold of his life.
 7. Paul experienced Christ as the drink offering and became a drink offering that was poured out upon the sacrifice and service of the saints' faith—2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6.

We need to see the heavenly vision that in His economy, God wants nothing except Christ. **Christ is wonderful**. As the One who is God and man, He has passed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement. All that Christ is and all that He has obtained and attained have been compounded into the all-inclusive Spirit. Now as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, **He lives in us**. How foolish not to give all the ground in our living to Him! Although we may love Him, we may still **limit** and **restrict Him by our efforts to be good Christian** husbands or wives. In ourselves, we still try to be humble, patient, kind, and loving. As long as we do this, there is no way for Christ to live in us.

Because we all have this tendency, I am burdened that we would see that God does not want us to try to be proper Christians—**He only wants us to live Christ**. We should forget about trying to be a good husband or wife and care only to live Christ. Let us love Him, contact Him, and be one with Him. How near and available He is! **He is within us and is one spirit with us**, waiting to be given the opportunity to live in us. If we would give Christ the ground to live in us, we should **cease from all our efforts**. Instead of asking the Lord to help us in our efforts, we should pray, "Lord Jesus, I can do nothing apart from You. How foolish I have been in trying so hard! Now, Lord, I see the vision that I cannot do anything without You. Lord, I thank You that You dwell in me. I ask You, Lord, to work within me. Lord, I praise You that You are my life and that You are waiting for the opportunity to live in me. Lord, I thank You that I am in You. Now I am willing to give You all the ground to do everything and to be everything in me." This is what it means for Christ to live in us. (*Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 38*)

Day 3

Philippians 3:13-15 - *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, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward. 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.*

Day 4

Ephesians 3:8 - *To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel*

1 Corinthians 1:2 - *To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:*

1 Corinthians 12:27 - *Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually.*

- F. We need to see a **heavenly vision of God's intention** to make Christ everything to us:
 1. If we **receive new mercy and grace** from the Lord, we will be able to drop all the good things—even the best things—and stretch forward to lay hold of Christ Himself—Phil. 3:7-8, 13.
 2. **We need to pray** that Christ will be everything to us in our daily life—Col. 3:17:
 - a. As we are doing various things, we should **apply Christ** in what we are doing.
 - b. Every day we need to **pray for new experiences of Christ**—the One who dwells in us to be our life and everything; this is our great need today—Eph. 3:17a.

II. The **issue** of our being brought back to Christ Himself is the **genuine church life**—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27; Rom. 16:1, 4-5, 16, 20:

- A. The genuine church life is Christ **realized, experienced, and expressed** by all the saints in a corporate way—Eph. 3:16-21:
 1. God planned the church for the purpose of **expressing Christ**; thus, the church is the expression of Christ—vv. 9-11, 21.
 2. The **church life** is nothing other than the **all-inclusive Christ** with His unsearchable riches experienced and enjoyed by us and expressed through us—vv. 8, 21.
 3. If we would have such a church life, we need to be **constituted with Christ** until all that we are and have is simply Christ Himself, who is all and in all; this is the essence and the substance of the church life—Col. 1:12; 2:9-10, 16-17; 3:4, 10-11; 4:15-16.
- B. The genuine church life is the **life of Christ**, Christ Himself—3:4; John 11:25:
 1. The genuine church life is **not a matter of teaching or doctrine**; rather, it is a life in which Christ Himself is realized, experienced, enjoyed, expressed, and exhibited by us—Phil. 3:10.
 2. The genuine church life can be realized only by the **experience of Christ in our daily life**—Rom. 8:9-11, 17.

Now we come to the second aspect of the Lord's recovery today—the practice of the proper church life. The **genuine experience of Christ always issues in and demands the church life**. The more you **experience Christ**, the more something within requires that you live in the proper church life. Satan is subtle. Throughout the centuries he has concealed the real experience of Christ, making Christ altogether objective, an object of human belief and worship. But once we experience Christ in a genuine and living way, He will require us to get into the church life because the dispensation of Christ into us is for the producing of the church. God dispenses Himself into us as everything for the purpose of gaining His corporate expression, which is the church.

The experience of Christ is somewhat hidden and mysterious, but the practice of the church life is quite complicated. How confused is the situation today regarding the church. Look around you. Where is the church life? We can see the Catholic Church with all its idols, images, and pagan things. The so-called Catholic charismatic movement even tolerates the worship of Mary, exposing the impurity of that movement. Consider all the denominations. They only have division and confusion. Every denomination is a deviation from God's center lane. Some denominations are larger and others are smaller, some are farther away and some are closer, but none of them is in the center lane. What about the free groups? They are too free. When the members of the body are so free, the body is dismembered and ceases to be a body. As we survey the situation of today's Christians, we see that there is no real church life. Hence, there is a **need of the recovery of the genuine church life**.

In order to have the proper church life, we must have two main things: Christ, the life-giving Spirit, as the content, and the standing on the ground of oneness in localities. In Anaheim we are not standing on any doctrine; we are standing on the oneness of the Body. Wherever we are—in San Francisco, Cleveland, New York, or any other city—we must be one. If we stand for doctrines, we shall be divided immediately, for one will have his concept, another his opinion, and still another his view. **But when we take Christ as our life, as our person, and as our everything, this Christ within us will require the proper church life**. In fact, the Christ in us will become the church life. Christ both requires and becomes the church life. (*Young People's Training, chapter 2*)

Day 5

Matthew 16:24-25 - 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. For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

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,

- C. The way to realize the genuine church life is to **experience Christ as everything to us**—Col. 1:27; 2:17; 3:1, 4, 10-11, 15-17:
1. The genuine church life comes from the **genuine inner enjoyment of Christ**—Eph.3:17a.
 2. The **development of Christ** into our inward being issues in the genuine church life— 4:13, 15-16.
 3. In order to have a church life to express Christ according to God's eternal purpose, our soul must be **subdued** and **saturated** with Christ as the Spirit—1 Thes. 5:23; Eph.3:17a; Gal. 4:19; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17.
- D. The genuine church life requires us to **take up our cross** and **follow Him**—Matt. 10:38:
1. We, His believers, were crucified with Christ, and now we must **bear the cross**—Gal.2:20; Matt. 16:24.
 2. The **self must be crossed out** so that Christ can come to be the reality of the church life—vv. 23-24; Rom. 6:5.
 3. There is no other way to realize the genuine church life but to **deny our natural life and the soul-life** and follow the Lord in our spirit—Matt. 16:24-27.

Day 6

Ephesians 3:16-19 - That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

- E. The genuine church life is through the **inner experience** of the indwelling Christ—Eph.3:16-17a; 4:12, 16; 2:21-22:
1. The **entire New Testament** is filled with the revelation of the indwelling Christ—Rom. 5:10, 17; Gal 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 24, 30; Phil. 1:20b-21a; Col. 1:27.
 2. In Ephesians 3:16-21 Paul prayed that we would be **strengthened with power** into the inner man with the result that Christ could make His home in our hearts and thereby occupy, possess, permeate, and saturate our whole inner being with Himself—vv. 16-17a.
 3. When Christ is able to **make His home in our hearts**, occupying all the inward parts of our being, we will be able to have the genuine church life—2:21-22; 4:12, 16.
- F. In order for us to have the genuine church life, we need to **experience** and **enjoy** the riches of Christ—3:8:
1. The genuine church life is **not an organization; it is in our spirit**, which is nourished with the riches of Christ until we are filled unto all the fullness of God—v. 8.
 2. The genuine church life is a **corporate life of seeking believers** who are filled with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God, that is, unto the expression of the Triune God—v. 19.

3. It is through the **inner experience of the indwelling Christ** that we apprehend with all the saints the unlimited measure of Christ and have the genuine church life for the building up of the Body of Christ—vv. 17-18; 2:21-22; 4:16.
 4. If we all experience and enjoy the riches of Christ, the genuine church life as the fullness, the expression, of Christ will be **produced spontaneously**—3:8, 17a; 2:22.
- G. All the saints need to experience something of Christ in their daily life and come together with the Christ whom they have experienced to **exhibit** this Christ, to **share** Him with one another, and to **enjoy** Him with God the Father for His pleasure; this is the genuine church life—1 Cor. 14:26; Heb. 10:25.

When we are saved and regenerated, we become members of the Body of Christ. Although every member is for the Body, we often do not live the life of a member. This is because there is **little coordination and building among us**. At best we may simply be brothers and sisters together in the church. We love the Lord and have a certain amount of contact with one another, but we may not be coordinated to be the one Body through the spreading of the spirit within us and the growth in life unto maturity. It is when we are coordinated to become one Body that we have actually **put on the new man**. Only then are we living the church life.

Our experience tells us that when a person is saved and experiences an **inward change of life**, he **immediately begins to love the church**. Then as he experiences a further change of life, his response, inclination, and longing for the church increase. The degree of our inclination and longing for the church is based on the degree of our inner transformation in life. **The more we are transformed in life, the more we love the church**. This is the issue of our transformation and growth in life. When we have completely entered into the church life in this way, we have altogether put on the new man.

The **putting on of the new man includes the Body life**. Twenty years ago I did not understand what it means to put on the new man. It was not until recent years that I discovered from my reading of Ephesians that the new man is the Body. The new man that we need to put on, as mentioned in chapter 4, cannot have a nature without a body. The new man in chapter 4 refers not to an individual new man but to a corporate new man with a corporate body. Therefore, to put on the new man involves both an inward nature and an outward expression. The living of the outward expression is the practicality of the church. It is of little value simply to exhort the saints to practice the church life, because the church life must be lived out from within. **We must have the experience of being strengthened into the inner man, of allowing Christ to make His home in our heart, and of allowing our spirit to spread into our soul to become the spirit of our mind**. In this way all our old nature and old living are discarded. (*The way of the Lord's Recovery, chapter 15*)