

GENERAL SUBJECT:
NUGGETS AND GEMS TO STRENGTHEN OUR LIFE OF
PURSUING CHRIST FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S ETERNAL ECONOMY

Messages One and Two

Taking Christ as Everything to Gain Him That He Might Gain Us

Scripture Reading: Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 16:24; Mark 9:7-8; 2 Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:15a, 16a; Col. 2:16-17

I. Christ is the desire of God's heart—Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Gal. 1:15a, 16a:

- A. God's heart's desire is that every person, every matter, and every thing in the universe would express Christ; when everything is headed up in Christ, there will be absolute peace and harmony, and everything in the universe will express Christ—Col. 1:15-19; 3:10-11; Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15-16; Isa. 55:11-13.
- B. We exist for the expression of Christ, we preach the gospel for the expression of Christ, our work is for the expression of Christ, and the church is for the expression of Christ—43:7; Phil. 1:20; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:58; John 17:23; Eph. 1:23; 3:19-21.
- C. Christ is the reality of every positive thing in the universe—Col. 2:16-17:
 - 1. The entire universe is a great painting drawn by God that speaks of Christ, describes Christ, and is for the expression of Christ—1:15-17; Psa. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20; Heb. 11:3.
 - 2. Daily we eat and drink Christ, weekly we have completion and rest in Him, monthly we experience a new beginning in Him, and throughout the year He is our joy and enjoyment—Col. 2:16-18a.
- D. We must see and realize inwardly that God does not want anything other than Christ Himself; God's goal in His recovery is to recover Christ as everything to us—1 Cor. 1:9:
 - 1. When Christ enters into us, He not only wants to be our life but also our everything; He is our breath of life (John 20:22), water of life (4:14; 7:37-39), bread of life (6:35, 48), light of life (1:4; 8:12), and abode of life (14:23; 15:1, 4-5).
 - 2. We must walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work by living Christ, growing Christ, expressing Christ, and propagating Christ in every respect—Col. 1:9-10.
 - 3. We must allow God to work Christ into us to such an extent that He is everything to us—our exceeding joy and our exceedingly great reward—Eph. 3:16-19; Psa. 43:4a; Gen. 15:1; John 15:11; Rom. 14:17; Phil. 3:14.
 - 4. The greatest need for us today is to see that Christ is the Spirit indwelling our spirit; if we do not see this point, everything of Christ will be merely an objective doctrine to us—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17—4:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; John 4:24.
 - 5. Christ is also the Word; when we contact the Lord's Word with our spirit, His words become spirit, and when His words become spirit, the Spirit enters into us so that we can be completely occupied by Him, transformed by Him, and mingled with Him to satisfy the desire of God's heart—Eph. 6:17-18; John 5:39-40; 6:63.
- E. When we have seen the all-inclusive Christ and have learned the secret of enjoying Him, we will be faithful to the Lord's recovery—Mark 9:7-8; Acts 26:19, 22; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9-10; 2:9-10; 2 Cor. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:9-18; Phil. 1:19-21a:
 - 1. We should concentrate on Him, not on any persons, things, or matters other than Him; we should focus on Him as our unique center appointed by God so that all the problems among the believers may be solved—1 Cor. 1:9; Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:17b, 18b.
 - 2. If we care only for Christ as our unique center, choice, preference, taste, and enjoyment, this will preserve us in the church in the Lord's recovery until He comes back; otherwise, we will be disappointed or distracted and forsake the Lord's recovery.

II. We must follow the pattern of Paul in Philippians to take Christ as everything:

- A. "To me, to live is Christ"—Paul took Christ as his living—1:21a.
- B. "As always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death"—Paul took Christ as his expression—v. 20.
- C. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"—Paul took the mind of Christ as his mind—2:5.
- D. "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"—Paul took Christ as his lived-out righteousness—3:9.
- E. "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"—Paul considered the knowledge of Christ to be supereminent—v. 8.
- F. "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"—Paul took Christ as his goal—vv. 13-14.
- G. "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"—Paul took Christ as his virtues—4:8.
- H. "I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me"—Paul took Christ as his power to live out Christ as his magnificent living—v. 13.
- I. "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"—Paul took Christ as his secret—vv. 11-12; cf. vv. 4-7.
- J. "Our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself"—Paul took Christ as his expectation—3:20-21.

III. We gain Christ that He might gain us (v. 12; cf. Hab. 1:1) according to the following aspects:

- A. Gaining Christ causes us to have a sense of God's presence (the pneumatic Christ)—John 20:22; Exo. 33:11a, 14:
 - 1. We should be afraid of only one thing—that we would lose the presence of our Lord—2 Cor. 2:10; cf. Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19.
 - 2. "He will enliven us after two days; / On the third day He will raise us up, / And we will live in His presence" (Hosea 6:2)—the reality of the third day is the person, the presence, of the resurrected Christ with the reality of revival (Hab. 3:2).
- B. Gaining Christ causes us to feel bright and clear inwardly—Rev. 22:1; John 1:4; 8:12; Ezek. 1:22, 26.
- C. Gaining Christ causes us to feel inwardly supplied with Christ as our spiritual food and spiritual drink—1 Cor. 10:3-4; John 6:57; 4:10, 14, 24; 1 Cor. 12:3b, 13.
- D. Gaining Christ causes us to grow in life and be transformed into His image—Col. 2:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2.
- E. Gaining Christ causes us to have vitality and to take action—Dan. 11:32b; Acts 1:8; 5:20; 13:1-4; 1 Cor. 14:31; cf. Ezek. 3:1-3; Psa. 68:11-13, 19.

IV. In order to take Christ as everything and gain Him in all things, we must learn to continually deny our self and turn to our spirit:

- A. We must enter into our spirit completely because the Lord as the Spirit, the reality of the Body, is in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.

- B. We must learn how to set our mind on the spirit; in other words, we must learn how to trust in God and depend on the Lord; the real secret of living the Christian life for the church life is for us to set our mind on the spirit—Rom. 8:6.
- C. Turning to the spirit is the secret of being a Christian; the way to follow the Lord, enjoy the Lord's riches, live in the reality of the Body of Christ, and function in the New Testament ministry is to continually exercise to reject our self, lose our soul-life, and turn to our spirit—2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 16—4:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 8:16.
- D. The work of the Lord, which we carry out by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a work that begins with the spirit and ends with the spirit; this work begins from our spirit and ends in others' spirits—1 Cor. 2:4-5, 13, 15; 2 Cor. 3:6; 13:3; cf. Psalms 42:7a.
- E. We have a spirit to contact and receive God and a soul to live out and express God; taking in God, living out God, and expressing God should be our joy, amusement, and entertainment—John 4:10, 14, 24; 6:57; Luke 1:46-47; 1 Cor. 10:31.
- F. The soul was created by God for the purpose of expressing Him, not to have its own enjoyment or preferences; in God's economy there is no selfish enjoyment; Paul's ministry was to dispense the riches of Christ as grace to the believers for their enjoyment—Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Eph. 3:2.
- G. To deny our self means to reject the soul's desire, preference, and choice; man's first sin was to do something for himself, to satisfy the self—Gen. 3:1-7.
- H. Anything that comes out of our self (the mind, emotion, and will of our fallen soul) is connected to Satan and to demons—Matt. 16:21-27:
 - 1. As the unchaste wife of Jehovah, Israel became evil; we need to realize that once we forsake God, we too can do any kind of evil—Hosea 4:1; Eph. 4:17-21.
 - 2. We must realize that if we do not remain in fellowship with God in our spirit, we lose God's presence and are capable of being in the flesh and of behaving like the worldly people—Phil. 2:1-2; 1 John 1:3; Eph. 4:17-19; Gen. 20; cf. 12:11-13; 13:18.
 - 3. We cannot afford to take a vacation from our fellowship with God in our spirit; our protection is not our self; it is God's presence—1 John 1:3; cf. Psalms 31:20.
- I. Prayer is the real denial of the self:
 - 1. We do not need to pray in a lengthy way; it is sufficient simply to call "O Lord Jesus"; even such a short prayer means "no longer I but Christ"—Rom. 10:12-13; Gal. 2:20.
 - 2. Our prayer testifies that we do not exercise our self-effort to deal with the situation (to "cast out demons"); instead, we apply Christ—Mark 9:14-29.
 - 3. To pray is to practice the vision concerning Christ with His death and resurrection being our replacement so that we may be fully "Christified" to satisfy the desire of God's heart—vv. 2-13.