

Foreword by Charles R. Swindoll, Th.D.

Let's Revel in

Philippians

A Daily Devotional Study
King James Version

By John G. Mitchell, D.D.

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Dedication

Dr. Willard M. Aldrich, Th.D.

Like sons of thunder,
Dr. Willard and Dr. John
taught,
prayed,
and served
beside one another as
associates,
brothers,
companions,
defenders,
enthusiasts,
friends

for more than 50 years.

With Dr. John taking the more public ministry
and Dr. Willard, as long-time president
of the Multnomah School of the Bible,
the more private,
the two served their Savior
with unrivaled devotion.

**The one could not have served so well
without the other.**

Foreword by Charles R. Swindoll, Th.D.

My first face-to-face connection with Dr. Mitchell came when I was a student at Dallas Theological Seminary in the fall of 1959. He was a visiting Bible lecturer. In fact, he returned for other series of lectures more than once before I graduated four years later.

I was so taken by his “scriptural saturation” (I don’t know of a better way to put it) that I told my wife Cynthia that she must attend the evening meetings in which he spoke to the general public. She and I never missed from then on. We shall forever remember his frequent exhortation to “read ya Bible!”

We had never heard such a Bible teacher as Dr. Mitchell, and we had heard many in our lives. His delivery was altogether unique—who will ever forget that Scottish accent?—his grasp of the written Word was incredibly comprehensive, his ability to trace various themes through the Bible was mind-boggling, and his devoted love for the Saviour was contagious.

I shall never forget how he often began his lectures with a gracious but firm reproof, concerned that we at the seminary might be getting an intellectual understanding of God’s Word but failing to have our hearts touched by the truth we were studying. His concern for our spiritual welfare melted me.

In the years that followed, it was my privilege to hear Dr. Mitchell on numerous occasions—in churches, at conference centers, at schools and other seminary settings. Each time I loved the Lord more after he spoke than I did before. Being in his presence was nothing short of being near one of the most Christlike men I’d ever known.

I recall one particular occasion when Cynthia was unsettled on a rather complicated subject. She and I had been taught a certain interpretation by one well-known Bible teacher and then a different interpretation by another respected scholar. Our confusion only intensified as we went to the Scriptures on our own and came to yet another conclusion.

At that time, Dr. Mitchell happened to be speaking nearby, which gave us the opportunity to attend the meeting and talk with him alone afterwards. With keen perception and in a quiet, gracious manner, he patiently listened to our dilemma and then explained the issue as he understood it (quoting numerous passages of Scripture in the process).

Ultimately, he helped us both come to terms with an interpretation that squared with Scripture and made sense. We must have been with him for thirty or more minutes, yet he never seemed hurried or irritated. What a man!

In later years, it became my privilege to speak alongside Dr. Mitchell at various gatherings, and at his invitation to stand before his students at Multnomah School of the Bible and teach God's Word—an honor I never took for granted. There he sat listening to me (of all people) and apparently enjoying the reversal of roles. He never failed to speak encouragingly as he affirmed God's hand on Cynthia's and my lives, as he took delight in our growth and as he found pleasure in the ways we were being used.

His quick wit often lifted my spirit. His passion for truth drove me deeper into my study. But it was his humility that impacted me the most in our final years of friendship. Never arrogant, never demanding, never jealous of another's success, and never selfish for the limelight, the man modeled genuine greatness, authentic servanthood.

I have not walked in the shadow of many giants in my lifetime but John G. Mitchell was certainly one. My life is richer and my love for Christ is deeper because of his towering presence and godly influence.

To this day, when my spirit is heavy or my mind gets overwhelmed or my heart begins to grow cold and indifferent, the memory of that faithful, dedicated servant of the Most High draws me back to the path of absolute obedience and the life of simple faith.

I say with great gratitude, he, being dead, still speaks.

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Let's Revel in Philippians

John G. Mitchell, D.D.

(Prof. Dick Bohrer, Editor)

Day 1

Philippians 1:1-2

Good-day, friends. It's a real joy for me sit down with you again to talk about the wonderful things of our Saviour, about the revelation of His own Word to our hearts. What a joy we have to share this precious Word which He has given to us and in which He has revealed His Person, His work, His purpose, His plan, and even that which He will do through eternity.

I say it's a wonderful thing that God should give to us in such simplicity and such clarity the Word of God. And then—to top it off—He also gives to us His Holy Spirit, the Author of Scripture, to indwell us that He might teach us and bring things to our remembrance and take the things of Christ and show them unto us.

Then remember the Spirit of God is in you—just as He is in me and all God's people—for the purpose of making known to your mind and my mind, to make real in our lives, the wonders of His grace and the marvels of His purpose and plan. I tell you, when I think of what God has done for us, it makes one want to get down and just worship Him. What a Saviour! What a Lord! And the tragedy is that too many of us Christians are living like paupers when we ought to be living as those who are sons and heirs of the living God!

Oh, that we might in some way know something of this life of rejoicing in the Lord always. Paul says, "And again I say, rejoice!" And by the way, this is one of the keynotes of this Philippian epistle, written from jail where a man chained to soldiers talks about rejoicing, talks about joy, talks about hope, talks about the marvel of God's salvation.

We're starting today a new series of studies in the book of Philippians.

You remember in our discussion of the book of Romans, we noted the relationship of these books the one to the other for Ephesians, Philippians,

and Colossians, these three Epistles of Paul, are an entity. They deal with Christ and His people, the Church. In the book of Ephesians we have the revelation of the church, the body of Christ. It is something that was hidden in God from past ages but now is made manifest through his servant Paul.

The doctrine of this book of Ephesians is guarded for us in the book of Colossians, written not only to guard that church against vain philosophies, mysticism and false legality but also to get their eyes occupied with Christ as the head of the Church. Now, in between these two books we have this little book of Philippians, four chapters, a small Epistle that is full of joy.

Philippians guards the practice of Ephesians. In other words, Philippians is the book of Christian experience. It is the one book in the New Testament that is entirely given over to Christian experience. And you will notice, as you read these four chapters, he's talking about the enjoyment of Christ.

Someone has well said, "The Spirit-filled life is the enjoyment of divine life." And the key word of Philippians is "rejoice." "Joy" and "rejoicing" are used, I think, about 18 times in the Epistle. Rejoicing is the keynote of Christian experience. It speaks of joy, even in suffering. For you remember that the Apostle Paul when he went down to Philippi was cast into jail. He suffered while he was in Philippi. And when he wrote the Epistle, he wrote it from Rome while he was in jail. And yet, the keynote of it all is joy and rejoicing.

Now most of us, when we get into trouble, we growl. We murmur. But to me it's been an amazing thing as I have thought of this precious book of Philippians that joy is the keynote of real Christian experience. And the Lord wants us to be a happy people, a hopeful people, and a rejoicing people, even in the midst of affliction and sorrows, misunderstandings and testings.

Now, I wish that you might turn with me to the book of Acts chapter 16 where we have the history of this church at Philippi. The Apostle Paul had gone down through Phrygia and Galatia and was hindered or forbidden by the Spirit of God to preach the Word in Asia. And after they were come to Mysia, Paul and his party tried to go down to Bithynia. The Lord suffered them not. He just hindered them. And then they came on down to a place called Troas on the edge of the Aegean Sea. And that night a vision appeared to Paul.

There stood a man of Macedonia who said to him, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." And after he had seen the vision, immediately Paul and his party took a ship, left Troas and made a straight course to Samothracia and then to Neapolis and then to Philippi, one of the chief cities of Macedonia. It was a colony. That means it was controlled from Rome. And they were there certain days (Acts 16:6-12).

And following that, you have Paul going on the Sabbath day down to the riverside where there was a prayer meeting. I take it there was no synagogue in the city of Philippi because there were not enough Jewish men to start a synagogue. You couldn't start a synagogue with fewer than 12 Jewish men. So the women used to go down to the side of the river and have a prayer meeting. Paul found out where the prayer meeting was, and he went down and preached to the women. And then you have the story of Lydia, the first Christian in Europe, a successful business woman. And I read in verse 14 of chapter 16 of Acts:

16:14. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

16:15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she urged us to come in.

And after that you have opposition to the Gospel by Satanic powers. A woman who was demon possessed, you remember, followed Paul and Silas. And Paul cast the demons out of her. And then you have the opposition of the world where he and Silas were cast into jail and then delivered.

If I might just take a moment here in this 16th chapter of the book of Acts. It's a wonderful thing to know that Paul received the vision of a man of Macedonia, saying, "Come over and help us," and he got there and found a group of women. Wasn't there a man in the crowd? It's an amazing thing how through the years God has taken women and used them in this matter of prayer? I think one of the greatest ministries that a person can have is in prayer. And here at Philippi there was a group of godly women who used to

meet just for prayer. And what better place for Paul to go and expound the scriptures.

And I want to say that when you come into this chapter, you find some hungry hearts at a prayer meeting. God turned Paul away from the teeming lands of Asia just to attend a women's prayer meeting. And it's a marvelous thing.

You know, I've often times thought, what if Lydia had missed the meeting. She would have missed hearing God's message for her. Do you ever stop to think about that? Every time you Christians miss a meeting, you miss something. I know you may have many, many excuses. You are very, very busy and when you go to a meeting you get nothing out of it. Why don't you go to give something?

Prayer meeting is a time when God's people co-operate together at the throne of grace. And I want to say to you, my friend, that most Christians miss so much because they don't meet with God's people. In fact, there's a verse in Hebrews chapter 10 where Paul says that we are not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. "And so much the more as you see the day approaching" (verse 25). That is, the more you look for the coming of the Lord, the more you want to meet with God's people. And Paul, here, found some very hungry hearts for God. And, my, if Lydia had missed the meeting, she would have missed hearing God's message through Paul.

Now, notice the kind of people that were in the Philippian church. You've got a business woman of wealth and culture. And afterwards you've got a rough, Roman jailor who had beaten Paul and Silas, but who was transformed by the power of the Gospel. And, as you go on, you have the result of the Gospel. These folk were rejoicing in the Lord. You see the fruit of the Gospel. They went on praising Him. They were all in Christ and were all knitted together in Him.

And then you've got the opposition to the Gospel; and note that Paul refuses to have the testimony of the demons speak concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

You say, "Well, wasn't this good publicity? Wasn't the testimony good?"

Yes.

"Then why stop it?"

Because it's not God's order for demons to testify concerning His Son.

As you read through Paul's life, Paul was just like his Master. Just as the Lord suffered for others, so did Paul. That's all I'm going to say about the history of the church. It started in Acts chapter 16. And the kind of people who were in the church included a successful business woman and a brutal Roman jailor. I just suggest this to your heart.

Now, let's come to the book of Philippians chapter 1, and let us just read the first two or three verses.

1:1 Paul and Timothy, the servants (the bond-slaves) of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

1:2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here you have the introduction to the Epistle showing how grace is given to us and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. You see, peace is the result of grace. There are a great many people today who have no peace of heart. There are many professing Christians who have no peace of heart. You know why? Because they're not trusting the grace of God. Peace is always the result of grace.

What do we mean by grace? It means that we accept what God has done for us on the ground of grace, gratis. Christ has completed a full salvation for men and women. You can't add to it, and by the way, you can't take from it. God offers you a perfect, complete salvation. And until you and I come into a right relationship with the Saviour, we'll never enjoy peace. Is it not a wonderful thing that you and I can have peace with God? One of the very first things we have when we accept the Saviour is peace.

In Romans chapter 5 the first verse, Paul could write, "Therefore being justified (being declared righteous) by faith, we have peace with God."

And Jesus could say in John 14:27, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

In Ephesians 2:14 I read, "For He is our peace."

You see, God wants you to have real peace, but the only place you'll find peace is when you accept the grace of Christ.

As Ephesians 2:8 and 9 say, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

If we work to get salvation, we'll never have peace because we never know when we've done enough.

Is it not, I say, wonderful that God should offer you a salvation that's complete, that's perfect and it can be yours by accepting Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour.

And for you who have access to the Saviour, you revel and you rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you read this book of Philippians through.

And remember the great key word is “rejoicing.”

We want you to be happy Christians.

And the Lord bless you today for His name's sake.

Day 2

Philippians 1:3-6

Good-day friends. We again come to you for a few moments when you and I can sit down together and enjoy the things of Christ. You know I've been thinking about this. Is it not a wonderful, marvelous thing that you and I have been purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ and can have fellowship around the throne of grace where the Spirit of God can teach us through His Word? What wonderful things God has for you and for me.

Now, we stated in our last lesson that Paul's letter to the Philippians is a book on Christian experience. The key word can be translated as "rejoice," "joy," and "rejoicing." It occurs 18 times in the Epistle. As I said, I repeat it, joy is the keynote of Christian experience, even in suffering.

And then we have the first two verses where we have the salutation of the Apostle Paul.

1:1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

1:2. Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I've always remembered that Paul and Timothy were the bond-slaves of Jesus Christ. Bond-slaves. My, there are so few bond-slaves of Christ. That is the relationship between a slave and his master.

And may I again remind you of the fact that Paul could say in Romans chapter one, "Paul, a bond-servant, a bond-slave of Jesus Christ." He wasn't a hireling. He was a bond-slave, one who was really in love with his master. So much so that he had no time of his own. It belonged to the Lord. He had no possessions of his own. They belonged to the Lord. He had no will of his own. He belonged to the Lord.

In other words, the Lord was pre-eminent. God give us men and women these days who can really say that they are the bond-slaves of Jesus Christ. He didn't even have a message of his own. He was God's messenger. And he wrote to all the saints in Christ. That's where all saints are,

irrespective of their experience, of their gifts, or even of their service. They are one in Christ.

“To the saints who are in Christ Jesus.” And remember, we’re not saints by character. We’re saints by calling. And now that we are saints, set apart for God, for that’s what it means, we are to live and we are to walk as becometh saints. And that’s what the Epistle is talking about. Christian experience. And then we come to the question of thanksgiving in verses 3-8—of thanksgiving.

And the first thing we have here is the cause of Paul’s joy. Now, if you’re taking notes, you want to put down “thanksgiving, verses 3-8.” And then I want to give two or three things under this and that is “the cause for his joy,” verses 3-5. The cause for his joy. Let me read the words.

1:3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

1:4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

1:5 For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now.

Here’s the cause of his joy. First of all, their fellowship in the Gospel. You notice this. “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” Request with joy. This man was a man of prayer and a man of thanksgiving, a man of rejoicing.

You know, when one reads the book of Corinthians, especially the second book, and see what Paul went through, how often he was in jail, how often he was beaten, how often he was hated and even stoned to death and shipwrecked. He went through the whole thing for Christ. Yet he could say, “I thank God for you folk with great joy.”

These dear Philippians had been born again in the midst of great suffering for Christ. And Paul had suffered for them. He had been in jail. He had seen the power of God manifested. He had seen people saved there, all kinds of people. And he rejoiced with them, even in their suffering and in his suffering.

So we read here, “always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” What for? For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. You see, their fellowship in the Gospel brought good news to sinners. It also brought good news to saints. To the sinners he had brought

the message of the cross. To the saints, he brought the message of the throne. And, believe me, it was good news to the jailor who was about to commit suicide. He rejoiced over their fellowship in the Gospel, and he rejoiced because of their service for the Lord. They had a wonderful time of fellowship together.

And then he rejoiced because of the gifts they'd given to him. You find this in verse 7. "I have you in my heart because you're all partakers of my grace." And when you come to chapter 4, they were the ones who shared with him in the Gospel and had taken care of him by their gifts. This was going to abound to their account in the glory.

And then he rejoices because of the divine assurance of the purpose of God, in verse 6. The reason for his confidence:

1:6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you shall perform it (or shall perfect it) until the day of Jesus Christ.

Now, I'd like to stop here for just a moment. Here's an amazing thing. The reason for his confidence, "Being confident of this very thing," the divine assurance that what God had started, He was also able to perform. You remember in 2 Timothy 1:12, Paul could say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard the deposit until that day." And in Ecclesiastes 3:14 "I know that whatever God does, He does it forever." Nobody can add to it. Nobody can take from it.

And in Romans 8:38 he was persuaded that nothing in life or death or any experience could separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Now, the reason for his confidence was the person of God and the purpose of God.

A good work had begun. And my friend, when God begins a good work in any believer's heart, in any person's heart, then you begin to see something of the purpose of God. In chapter 16 of Acts, we saw the power of the Gospel in transforming these dear people. Here was a successful business woman who had come into a place of real peace and rest. Here was a Roman jailor who was ready to commit suicide. He saw the power of God. He heard of the grace of God. I tell you this man had a real experience with God.

Even prisoners.

Allow me to refresh your memory in Acts 16. Here were Paul and Silas in jail. They were suffering. They had been beaten up. More than likely, salt had been poured into their wounds. Their feet were fast in the stocks. What were they doing? Singing. Praising the Lord.

My sakes! How can a man do that? Here their feet are fast in the stocks in the inner dungeon down where the slime and the snails and the filth were—a smelly, dark, dungeon. Feet in the stocks, backs bleeding, and singing in the middle of the night.

You say, “Why, man, this is supernatural.”

Of course, it is. The Christian life is supernatural. And these men were in fellowship and in relationship with God who was over all. So they began to sing.

What do you think they were singing? Why, of course, they were singing about the glories of Christ.

Where do you think the Philippian jailor got the words when he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” What gave him the idea of salvation? He heard them singing in the middle of the night.

Here’s a supernatural thing. Not only that, but he saw the power of God. There was an earthquake. Every man’s band was loosed. That’s why he wanted to kill himself. And the marvelous thing was that nobody escaped. We not only saw the power of God in creation, but we see the power of God in sovereignty. And then we see the power of God in saving grace when the jailor and his household were saved. He heard the word of God. Where did he hear that? In the jail. And he was convicted that he needed salvation. And then how was he saved?

When he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved,” Paul said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

What did he know about the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, he had heard Paul and Silas singing about the glories of Christ. Now, I’m not at all questioning the fact that possibly Paul and Silas were preaching as well as singing in the middle of the night. All the prisoners heard the Word of God and heard of the love and grace of God, our Saviour. And no wonder! The Philippian jailor must have been astounded to hear this noise in his jail and hear these men singing and preaching the Gospel. And then there was an earthquake. That would shake him up. And then, when every man’s band

was loosed, he thought everybody would disappear. That meant his death by the Roman government. That's why he wanted to commit suicide.

And Paul says, "Do thyself no harm. We're all here."

I say, it's a wonderful thing to see Paul and Silas living a supernatural life in jail. We see the power of God in the earthquake. We see the power of God in His sovereignty and in that no one escaped. Then we see the power of the Gospel in saving grace when the jailor and his whole household were saved. I tell you this is a wonderful story. No wonder Paul could say in verse 6, "Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you shall perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Now mark the sixth verse. I want you to memorize it. "Being confident of this very thing." Believe me, my friends, the Gospel of the grace of God should give you confidence. God is not playing haphazardly with this question of salvation. God isn't playing with souls. A man or a woman who are sinners can come and accept Jesus Christ as Saviour. God means business. And do you think God is going to save a man and then not finish the job?

What kind of a God do you think we have? Our God, when he starts a work will finish it! I repeat that verse in Ecclesiastes 3:14, "I know that whatever God does, he does it forever." Nobody can add to it and nobody can take from it. God does it. The salvation we have starts in God, is continued by God, and is going to be completed by God. When God puts His hand upon a man or a woman to save them, to bring them into relationship with Himself, to make them a member of His family, my friend, you can trust God to work out His purpose in that person.

And sometimes I wonder what kind of a God some of you Christians have. We've got a Saviour who is absolutely perfect and, when He died for us, He finished and completed the work of salvation. And even now, right while I'm talking to you, Jesus Christ is on the throne, representing every Christian, praying for every Christian. Praying for what? That that work which He started will be completed, so that every believer will stand in the presence of God conformed to the image of His Son.

We can truly say, "Hallelujah, what a Saviour."

My friend, do you have Him? Believer, why don't you revel in Him today? And read the book of Philippians through.

And the Lord bless you.

Day 3

Philippians 1:3-6

Good-day friends. We again come to you, the object being to expound the Word of God, to feed and edify the people of God as well as to bring the Good News to men and women who need a Saviour. It's a wonderful thing to have a Saviour who, when He starts a job, has guaranteed to finish it, isn't it? To have a Saviour like that! Let me read again from the book of Philippians which we're studying. The first chapter, verses three to six, I read,

1:3 I thank My God upon every remembrance of you,

1:4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

1:5 For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day unto now.

This filled Paul with great joy.

1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

Let me just stop here. We were dealing in our last lesson with this sixth verse. And we were saying that the real reason for Paul's confidence was the person of God Himself, the divine assurance that what God had started He will complete. This is what gives Paul that certainty, that joy, that peace, that confidence, that when God starts something, He always finishes it. I want you to mark that. God never starts anything He doesn't finish.

Here in Portland, I remember some years ago, we had passed down a certain street and a house had been started by somebody, I think possibly in the thirties, in the time of the depression. The foundation was there, parts of the walls were up, and it was there for many, many years. Weeds and everything else were around it. Somebody started a job and didn't finish it. It wasn't very nice to look at either. It was an eye-sore in the neighborhood. I think they pulled it down. But I remember how long that building or part of a building stood there.

God isn't like that. When God starts a work in a man's life, God's going to finish it. Paul says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you shall perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." And we said in our preceding lesson, if you read the 16th chapter of the book of Acts, where you have the history of the Philippian church, you'll notice it was started in persecution. There was the supernatural presence of God, and also there was great opposition from Satan and the opposition of men. The children of God suffered because of the persecution; but they had a confidence, they had a joy that was beyond the comprehension of men.

Now, let's look at this question of verse 6 again.

"He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it." Now, this word "perform" is a good word. And I'm going to take the time for this because there are three verses that I want to put together. This word "perform" is the same word "perfect." The word is used, for example, in Romans and in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 14 which says this: "For by one offering he hath perfected forever those who are being sanctified, whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us." A witness of what? Of the perfection that we have in Christ.

In other words, the work of Christ at the cross guarantees the perfection of His people. Now, this is in the past. It's in the perfect tense. He by one offering hath perfected forever those—I think the King James Version says, "those that are sanctified." It's in the present tense, those that are being sanctified. We are being set apart for God because the work of Christ at the cross perfected us. In other words, a child of God stands in the presence of God perfect in Christ because of what He did at the cross. That's a past work of Christ. It guarantees perfection.

Now, you go to Hebrews chapter 7, verse 25, where the word is again used. Allow me to quote the King James and then give you what it should say. "Wherefore he is able to save *to the uttermost* all those who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us." Now, allow me to put it this way because the Greek word '*tolius*' is the same word. "Wherefore he is able to save *perfectly* all those who come unto God by him because he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The present ministry of Christ at the right hand of God is as our intercessor. He guarantees the perfection of His people. So in Hebrews 10:14, the work of Christ at the cross guarantees our perfection. Hebrews

7:25, the present ministry of Christ guarantees our perfection. Now, let's come to our verse in Philippians 1:6. "Being confident of this very thing." What very thing? That He, that God, who hath started a work in us, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it. It's the same word. "Perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."

In other words, the purpose of God guarantees perfection of every real believer in Christ. Now, I've put the three of them together. The past work of Christ at the cross guarantees our perfection, in Hebrews 10:14. The present ministry of Christ in heaven guarantees the perfection of God's people. That's Hebrews 7:25. And the purpose of God, or if you please, the character of God, guarantees the perfection of God's people in Philippians 1:6.

Allow me again to quote that verse from Ecclesiastes 3:14. "I know," said the writer. And by the way, Ecclesiastes was the last book that Solomon wrote. He wrote the Song of Solomon when he was a young man. He wrote the book of Proverbs when he was in middle age. And he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes at the end of his ministry, with all his experience, with all that he had. He came to some conclusions and he made this statement, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him." That men might put their trust in Him.

So I would suggest, Christian friend, that you take the time and the energy to read and then to memorize that sixth verse of Philippians 1. "Being very confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in us shall perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." And I'm going to repeat it. I want you never to forget it. That the past work of Christ at the cross spoken of in Hebrews 10:14 guarantees the perfection of His people. And in Hebrews 7:25 Christ's present ministry guarantees the perfection of God's people. In Philippians 1:6, the purpose of God and the character of God guarantee the perfection of God's people.

And when will it be revealed? It says here "until the day of Jesus Christ." This is to be the day of manifestation. It's the day when our Lord is going to come for His own and we will be manifested. Colossians 3:4 says, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory."

Paul could say in Romans 8:18, “I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glories that shall be revealed in us.” In other words, the day of manifestation is when our Lord shall come for His own. The day of Jesus Christ. We see the unchanging purpose of God, the power of God, the unbreakable promise of a never-changing God. And, at the return of Jesus Christ, this brutal Roman jailor will be revealed in all the completeness and perfection of all that he is in Christ Jesus.

This Lydia, this business woman, the first convert in Europe at Philippi, will stand before God conformed to the image of Jesus Christ; and she will be manifested as one of the children of God. Body, soul, and spirit perfected, redeemed, eternal. And may I remind you of those amazing verses in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5:23 and 24. Allow me to close today with them: “Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole being, spirit, soul, body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it. His work at the cross guarantees it, His present ministry guarantees it, and the purpose of God guarantees it. You can truly say with the songster, “Hallelujah, what a Saviour.”

My friend, listen. God will never be satisfied until you and I stand in His presence conformed to the image of His Son. This is the purpose of God for you and me. Is it not marvelous that the moment you and I came as sinners and accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour, God started a work. And God will not be satisfied with you or me until we stand in His presence, conformed to the image of His Son.

And you know, when I think of that, I remember a word of exhortation by dear brother Bach of the Evangelical Alliance Mission. That dear saint of God is now with the Lord. I heard Him say one time to the people of God, “Dear Saints, please don’t criticize another Christian, until God gets through with him.” Well, when God gets through with us, we’re going to be just like His Son. There’ll be no room for criticism, will there?

Isn’t it wonderful to have a Saviour like this? Isn’t it wonderful to have one who guarantees your perfection? My friends, you ought to go and walk on air today and just live the day, thanking and praising God for His wonderful grace.

Day 4

Philippians 1:7-8

Good-day friends. Again we come to you, and I tell you again and I speak from the very depths of my being, my heart, that I just enjoy sitting here talking to you about the wonderful things of our Saviour and what He has accomplished for men and women.

I have the privilege of holding Bible conferences and meeting with God's people continually. And you know my heart is really burdened that God's people know their Bibles. It's an amazing thing how little of the Book God's people know. God has given to us the Spirit of God to indwell us. He's given us a Bible to read. He's revealed His person. He's revealed His purpose, and yet so few people take the time to sit down with their Bibles and find out the wonderful revelation of His Son and what He has accomplished for you and for me.

And may I today at the very beginning plead with your heart to ask the Lord to put into your heart and into my heart a greater yearning for the Word of God. Oh, to be specialists for Christ in the Word of God.

Are you a Sunday School teacher? Are you a Christian worker? Are you a pastor? Are you a deacon? Whatever you may be, won't you get into your Bibles so that God will find you usable? Indeed, I would suggest that you make yourself available to God. Offer yourself to be available to God, to be God's channel to somebody today in the giving out of the Word of God. Teach some precious boys and girls or young people the wonderful things of Christ.

For, as we're studying here in the book of Philippians, we're dealing with Christian experience. Philippians is not a book of doctrine. If you want doctrine, then you go to Romans and you go to Ephesians. But Philippians is a book of Christian experience. It's a life of joy and blessing in Christ. And we want you to be filled with joy, even though you may be in suffering, even though you may be in sorrow and you're weak and you're frail and your condition perhaps is not very good and your circumstances might be worse.

And yet, if you know the Saviour, you know something about the purpose of God and that, when God saved you, He started to do a job. God will not be satisfied until He finishes that job.

This is what we find in the 6th verse of the first chapter of Philippians, which we were dealing with in our last lesson:

1:6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you shall perform (perfect) it until the day of Jesus Christ.

I'm amazed, and I don't mind repeating these things that the purpose of God for you, my friend, is that we should be just like His Son, Jesus Christ. To be conformed. If I may quote again from Romans 8:29, God has determined that we shall be "conformed to the image of His Son." My, what a prospect! What a hope! What a hope!

You go and take a look in the looking glass. Not much to look at, is there? But, boy, when we see Him, we're going to be just like Him. Oh, the beauty of it, the glory of it, the marvel of it, that God who starts a work guarantees to finish it. That the work of Christ on the cross guarantees it, as we had in Hebrews 10:14. The present ministry of Christ in heaven, guarantees it, as we have it in Hebrews 7:25. And the purpose of God guarantees it in Philippians 1:6. Now, let's go on from there.

In verses 7 to 8, after speaking of the unchanging purpose of an almighty God, the unbreakable promise of a never-changing God, Paul begins to manifest something of his own heart, his yearning for these dear Philippian Christians who were born again in the midst of great persecution. Let me read verses 7 and 8 of chapter 1.

1:7. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

1:8. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

My, I don't know of any man who had such love and devotion for the people of God like this man Paul. What a heart for God! What a heart for His people! What a heart for the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Listen to him, "I have you in my heart." How many people do you have in your heart? Just the ones you love? Just the ones who are close to you, the ones you enjoy? How many of God's people do you have in your heart? You know Satan is doing a job today, and I'm going to say this. Satan is doing a job today of dividing God's people up. We criticize each other and we have no fellowship with certain ones unless they cross their "t's" or dot their "i's."

My, this man Paul had a big enough heart for all God's people. "I have you in my heart." Look at verse 8, "For God is my record." God is my witness. And let me tell you, when Paul says, "God is my witness," it is well worth noticing. When a man says, "God is my witness" or "God is my record," he must be telling the truth. These are not just words he's using. "God is my witness, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels, or the compassion of Jesus Christ." I long after you all. He had a heart's devotion not only to Christ, but to the people of Christ. To God's people.

I ask you, my Christian friend, how many Christians do you have on your heart? How many Christians do you have on your heart? Do you know I've met Christians who have a great burden for lost men and women. They pray for lost men and women, soul-winning. And I'm not opposed to that, by any means. God forbid.

But how many are burdened for God's people in their frailty, in the failures? How many are burdened for God's people that they might grow in the grace of God, burdened that God's people might be built up in the faith, burdened that God's people might be delivered from the world with all its subtleties?

In this day of compromise when men are afraid to stand for the truth of God, we quibble along. We talk about having a dialogue with the world, a common ground whereby the world and the believers can dialogue. Listen friends, Paul could say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

There's no common meeting ground. The world is under judgment and the world needs a Saviour, and our job is to bring the world the Gospel of God's beloved Son. Of course, we should help people. Of course, we should take care of those who are in need and do all we can to relieve the sufferings of people. When it comes to the world, its system, its system that

is opposed to God, my friend, there should be no place for it in the believer's heart except to win it to Christ. That's our job. The world can't be transformed, but individuals can. And God must do it. You can't do it. God must do it. And you've got the message that does it, that will transform sinners into saints, wolves into sheep, children of wrath into children of God.

Paul is burdened here in the Epistle because of these dear Christians who are in trouble in suffering for the Gospel's sake. He says, "I want you to know and God is my witness that I love you all. I greatly long after you all in the compassion of Christ. Oh, how I long to be with you. How I long to bring some word of encouragement, of edification to you."

Then he goes on in verse 7:

1:7. Inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

Now, Paul brings them into this. Why is he in bonds? Why is he in jail? Why is he a prisoner? Because of his defense and his confirmation of the Gospel. And because of the grace of God, he and these dear ones down in Philippi have been knitted together in the grace of God. They're partakers of the grace of God. And "God is my record."

What I'm trying to get to you is to look at this man Paul and the great heart he had for God's people. One of the greatest needs today among Christians is this very thing, the compassion for each other. If you see a child of God failing God, don't criticize him. Don't judge him. Don't club him either. What he needs is not a club. What he needs is some love, some understanding. You see, most of us want the other Christian to live the way we think he should live. And that gets us into trouble, makes us judges, makes us critics; and the result is instead of helping the other believer, we knock him further down.

Oh, may I plead with you who are Christians, and I'm taking the time to do this, because everywhere I see the tremendous need for understanding and compassion and love among God's people. How many Christians do you have on your heart? When you see children of God in your church, in your assembly and they're failing God, I'm not holding a brief for their

failure, don't misunderstand me; but sometimes I think some of these Christians are just needing a lot of love. They need a lot of understanding.

You see, the danger is that you and I, from where we look at it, sit in judgment because we think they're the ones who shouldn't do those things. Did you ever put yourself in their position, into their circumstances, into their background and try to meet the problem from where they sit, not from where you sit? You know what the psalmist said (137:1)? "I sat down where they sat and I wept with them." Why don't you go down and sit where they sit? And instead of manifesting a critical attitude, why don't you love them? Why don't you take them upon your heart? Take them before God in prayer. Love them, manifest grace, manifest compassion, the very compassion of Christ.

Oh, I just plead with you Christians today on this. What the world needs to see is a revelation of the love of God in His people. It's a tragedy when a Christian runs off to the world and criticizes other Christians before the world. This is a tragedy. You protect them from the world. You meet with them if you can, or at least pray for them. May God put them upon your heart.

And Paul says, "God is my witness how greatly I long after you in the compassion of Christ." May God grant to you and to me to so walk before God that something of the love and the compassion and tenderness of the Saviour will be evident in us.

I need it.

You need it.

Let us get our hearts and minds occupied with Christ today.

And may we be available to God to be found as channels, to be usable by God in the lives of other people.

And the Lord richly, wonderfully bless you today.

And don't forget to read the book of Philippians.

And the Lord bless you for His name's sake.

Day 5

Philippians 1:9-11

Good-day, friends. As I have been reading the book of Philippians, I'm again thrilled with the possibility of every believer's living to the praise and the glory of God's grace. I'm astounded, when I think of the purpose of God in His people, that "He who hath begun a good work in us will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." And during this time, the Lord is perfecting us for the work started when we were saved.

You remember in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is what I mean when I say that the work which God started when we were saved continues to move day by day, hour by hour. The Spirit of God is perfecting that which God wants to do in us and for us so that, when you and I stand in the presence of God, we will be conformed to the image of His Son.

As 1 John 3:2 says, "When we see him, we shall be like him. We shall see him as he is." And when Paul was filled with this great purpose of God, we see the great yearning of his heart for God's people. We see his great yearning that the Gospel of God's grace be made known to others.

Now, reading from verses 9-11, we have Paul's prayer for them. And I'd like to read those verses, Philippians chapter 1, reading from verses 9 through 11:

1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

1:10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

1:11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Now, here is one of Paul's prayers. And by the way, I would suggest to those of you who love the study of the scriptures that you examine Paul's prayers and how he prayed. It would be a good lesson for us on how to pray.

For example, in Ephesians chapter 1, you remember, he prayed for knowledge that we might know certain things. When you come to chapter 3 of Ephesians, we have his prayer for power and for fellowship. When we come to Colossians in the first chapter, you have his prayer to know God's will. And when we come to this prayer here in Philippians chapter 1, verses 9-11, it's a prayer for discernment. And, my, how we need that.

There are so many things going around today, so many teachings and doctrines of men. No wonder people write and say, "We're all confused. We don't know what to believe." It would be well for us to pray this prayer of Paul's that we might be able to discern the things that differ.

Young people, raised in our local churches often are taught only so much of the scriptures. They go off to college and the first thing you know, they become shaken in their thinking. Some of them lose their faith; and some come back, absolutely confused, not knowing what to believe. Some Christians go to church after church and the more they go around, the more confused they get, I'm sorry to say. So Paul makes a tremendous prayer here. Listen again to what he says in verse 9:

1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (discernment).

In all judgment, in all discernment. You know we're living in a day when there is so much compromise. We get used to it and say, "Well, we must manifest love."

Listen, my friend, love never compromises the truth. Jesus Christ was the personification of love. He was the truth. But He never compromised. He didn't compromise with the Sadducees, who were the liberals of the day. He didn't compromise with the Pharisees who were the legalists of the day. He didn't compromise with the Herodians who were the politicians of the day. He never compromised. And yet, He's the personification of love.

Love never compromises the truth. We are to contend for the faith and to contend for the faith in love. That's found in the book of Jude, dealing with false teachers. And we certainly have to contend for the faith in the light of false teachers. As God's people, we ought to live and experience and manifest love, but with knowledge and with discernment.

I think we ought to pray for a love that is able to discern. How far can I go in love and not compromise? You take in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 that amazing passage. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I’m nothing else but a tin can. Though I give my body to be burned and give all my goods to feed the poor, though I prophesy, all these things and have not love, I am nothing,” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). But Paul here is praying that we might have love with knowledge, with discernment. It is not a question of peace at any price.

In other words, the more you love Him, the more you love His Word, the more knowledge you’ll have of the purpose and will of God, and the more you will be able to discern.

Do you remember 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 21, where we are to prove all things and “hold fast that which is good.” How can I prove all things if I don’t know my Bible? I confess again to you, my friend, I’m appalled at times of the ignorance of God’s people on what God has already revealed to us in the scriptures. The trouble is this: We want experiences, but we’re not willing to take the time to be diligent, to get into our Bibles and know what God has already revealed.

I have met people who say they have this vision and that vision and the other vision. My friend, you can talk all you want to about your vision. That doesn’t appeal to me one little bit, unless it’s according to the Word of God. God has given to us a complete revelation in the scriptures. And if I really want to know the will of God and the purpose of God and be able to discern that which is right and that which is wrong, then I’ve got to know the scriptures.

And Paul here is praying that our love may abound, yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment. And I tell you if ever we needed discernment, it’s today. And how we need to have the Word of God filling our minds. And I declare to you, if you claim to love the Saviour, you will love His Word. If I love His Word, I’m going to read it. I’m going to study it. I’m going to find out what God has to say.

As Paul says, “He that is spiritual compareth spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Corinthians 2:13). And as Peter says, “Scripture is of no private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20). That is, you must compare scripture with scripture. And, when we compare scripture with scripture, we get an idea at least of the purpose and will of God, not only for the church and for the

world, but for you and for me individually. Paul prays here in verse 9 that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.

Then the second part of his prayer, his second request is “that you may approve things that are excellent.” Or if I might change the wording “to be able to discern, to prove the things that differ.” And again I say, how can you prove it, unless you get into the Word of God? You may approve the things that are excellent or you may approve the things that differ. He’s really coming into the question again of discernment, to discern things, to know that which is right and that which is wrong.

You say, “Well, Mr. Mitchell, what shall I do? Do you mean I must read all these books on the different cults and doctrines?”

No! You’ve got to know your Bible. Get to know your Bible.

I had a friend one time who worked for the government in the Federal Reserve Bank in Ohio. And when I met him he had in one pocket a dollar bill, a five dollar bill, a ten dollar bill, and a twenty dollar bill. He had half-dollars and quarters in his pockets. His fingers were always on the job, either figuring and feeling these coins or he was examining bills, five, ten, twenty dollar bills and so on. He was always examining bills.

And I said, “Why do you do that?”

He said, “The more proficient I am in my sight and in my feeling of the coins and of the bills, the quicker I am able to find that which is spurious.”

One of his jobs was to do this in a bank. He could look at bills and tell you whether they were spurious by feeling them, just by feeling them and by looking at them. He didn’t have to know all about every spurious coin or every spurious bill. All he had to know was what a real bill was like and what a real coin was like. So that the moment he picked up something that was spurious, he immediately knew it wasn’t right. It was counterfeit.

I’m not asking you to read all the books and pamphlets on the different doctrines of men. It’s fine if you have the time; but please, how are you going to prove them wrong? How are you going to prove if they are right or wrong unless you know the truth. This is what Paul is praying for—that our love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment, and that we may prove that which is different, being able to discern that which is different. That’s why in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5:21, Paul says, “Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.”

Then in Philippians 1:10, our love is to be an active love. I'm going to stop here and leave that until our next lesson.

But the thing I'm after is, how am I going to know and discern that which is right and that which is not true?

There's only one thing to do. Get into your Bibles. I plead with you. If you are Christians, get into your Bibles. Read and reread and reread and it's going to be a chore. You're going to have opposition. Your flesh will rebel against it possibly. Or somebody will scorn you for reading the Bible. Never mind. You get to know your Bible and be able to discern and to prove all things, holding fast to that which is good.

Get to know the purpose of God, the mind of God. And the only place you'll find it is in the Word of God. This is where He gives it to us. Hence, there have been men and women of the Book. My prayer is that you will be a boy or man or girl or woman of the Book.

May your love abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, in all discernment that you might be able to prove the things that are different.

And the Lord bless you today for His name's sake.

Day 6

Philippians 1:9-11 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We're studying these days in the book of Philippians, the book of joy, the book of Christian experience, the Epistle that tells us what real life is.

We were dealing with the prayer of Paul in chapter one, verses 9-11, this amazing prayer of Paul's for these Philippian Christians and, may I add, for you and for me. And again may I repeat that the Apostle Paul gives to us in his various Epistles the desire of his heart and the prayer for God's people. In Ephesians chapter 1 and chapter 3 you have two prayers of Paul, a prayer for knowledge and a prayer for strength and for fellowship. In the book of Colossians you've got another one in chapter one, and that is the prayer for the will of God to be known. Then, we have here in Philippians a prayer for discernment that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment, and that ye may be able to prove the things that are different. So may I again read these verses, please, in Philippians chapter one, verses 9-11. Just these three verses.

- 1:9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (in all discernment);
- 1:10. That ye may approve (or prove) things that are excellent (different); that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;
- 1:11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

My, how this man is in love with his Saviour! I can't help but marvel when I see how he yearned over God's people, and how ambitious he was not only to walk in the will of God, but ambitious that God's people know the will of God, even to discern the will of God and be in it.

Now, we had in our last lesson, first the request that their love may abound in knowledge and in discernment. And the second request was that they might be able to prove the things that are different. And, now, the third request is in verse 10.

1:10. That ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.

That ye might be sincere in character, without offense in conduct, until the Lord shall come. This is what he's talking about. If I were to follow this teaching through, I would point you back to Romans chapter 13 where you've got the relationship between Christians about helping a weaker believer. I'm not going to take that up, for I've mentioned it before over this broadcast. But he asks here for an act of love, that their love may be sincere and without offense.

I made a moment ago the statement to be sincere in character. Sincerity should always characterize the man or the woman in Christ. There's no excuse for insincerity. You know, I'll go a long way with people who are sincere. I may not agree with them. They may be failing God. But, if they're sincere, they'll want to do the right thing. They'll want to walk with God. They'll want to know the things of God. I'll go a long way with them. Let us be this way, sincere in character. Nothing can take the place of sincerity. Insincerity is a bad thing. May God grant that you and I will be always sincere in our character.

And then we are to be without offense in our conduct. Without offense in our conduct, neither giving nor taking offense. How long? Until the day of Jesus Christ. Until the Lord Jesus comes for us. Let us then be sincere in character and without offense in our conduct.

You notice in verse 6 He's going to perfect us till the day of Christ. In verse 10, we are to be sincere in character and without offense till the day of Christ. That is, until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In one you have the purpose of God being completed till the day of Christ. In the other, you have our actions, our experience, our responsibility as Christians to live till the day of Christ. And you know, that may be today. That's what we're waiting for. We're like the Thessalonian church in chapter 1, verse 10. They waited for his Son from heaven. That's the day of Christ when you and I shall be gathered together unto Him. It's a wonderful thing to look forward to that fact, that you and I are going to stand in the presence of God looking just like Christ. That's verse 6. In the meantime, we are to be sincere in character; we are to be without offense in our conduct.

And then, in verse 11, such a life and such a hope is to the glory of God. May I read,

1:11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Such a life is to the glory of God. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness.

I'm reminded of that little passage in Galatians, chapter 4, verses 22 and 23 where the writer says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (self-control): against such there is no law." This is the fruit of the Spirit. Or if I might say this, it is the fruit of righteousness. You and I have been joined to a righteous Saviour. We belong to Him. You've got a new life in Christ, a new relationship. What He wants of us is to walk before Him, being filled with the fruits of righteousness.

You know, this is the thing, if you pull it all together, if you take this prayer of Paul. Our love should abound in knowledge and discernment. Here is the mental thing, being able to prove the things that differ. This is where your minds are to be occupied with God.

And then our love is to be an act of love. We are to be sincere in character, and we are to be without offense in conduct until the coming of the Lord. And such a life is to the glory of God. Why? Because such a life will be filled with the fruits of righteousness through Christ Jesus. This is what Paul means, I think, in a way in Galatians 2:20 when he said, "I am crucified with Christ: (I no longer live) ...but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Or take Philipians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Or you take later in chapter one, verses 20-21, "that Christ shall be glorified in my body whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (to be with Christ)." So it makes no difference whether I live or die, as long as Christ is magnified. This is the passion of this man Paul. This is what he wants of you and me. Sincerity of character, always to be sincere in the thing we do. Not to be two-faced, but sincere.

And then without offense. Not to lord it over your brother. Not to sit in judgment on your brother. But to be without offense either to give offense or to receive offense. Some people don't give offense, but they're very

touchy. They've got a chip on their shoulder. In fact, I think sometimes they've got a plank on their shoulder. Taking offense is so easy.

You say, "Well, I'm so sensitive."

I know, we're all sensitive. It depends upon who's talking to us. But it's so easy to give offense; and it's so easy, in fact, I think it is easier to take offense at what people say. Oh, to have a love for Christ that overmasters us, that consumes us, which will be evident by our love for each other. And when we have love for each other and we're abounding in love one to the other and have knowledge and discernment, the result is going to be that our lives will be sincere in character and will be without offense in walk.

And the fruit of righteousness will be manifested by Jesus Christ, even until the day of Christ, that we might be unto the glory and praise of God.

What is it all for? For the glory of God!

Are you living for that?

Do you remember in Ephesians chapter one where we had, if I may refresh your memory, the work of the Father in our redemption. What for? That we might be to the praise of His glory (verse 6). The work of the Son in our redemption. Why? That we might be to the praise of His glory (verse 12). To be sealed by the Spirit of God. Why? That we might be to the praise of His glory (verse 14). The ultimate purpose of all redemption, of all Christian living, of all testimony is that God may be glorified in all things. This is the ultimate of our salvation.

Why do you think He saved you? To get you to heaven? Yes, but that's only a part of it. To forgive you your sins? Yes. To give you life eternal? Yes. To make you a child of God? Yes. To pronounce you righteous? Yes. But my friend, why did He do it? That we might be to the praise of His glory. Oh, my friends, let this be the concern and desire of our hearts that what we say, what we do, what we think, what we purpose, what we plan, our whole life, will be geared to the glory of God.

Do you remember Jesus said in John 17, "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth." If you start in at chapters 11 of John through 17, how over and over again, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." And if the Son of Man be glorified, the Father will be glorified in Him.

In John 17:4, He prayed, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." In verse 5, "Glorify me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world

was.” Verse 22, “The glory which you have given me, I have given them.” Verse 24, “And Father, I will that they may behold my glory.”

You see, the ultimate purpose of all of God’s program for man, the redemption of the race, the building of a church, is that God may be glorified through the countless ages of eternity; and the marvelous thing is, you and I are going to share in that glory. “For the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them.” (verse 22). “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:4). “I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,” said the Apostle Paul (Romans 8:18).

You see, friends, the ultimate is the glory of God. Are you living for that? Or do you want your own way? Do you want your own will? Here I’m living in a generation that’s affected by a materialistic philosophy, by a humanistic philosophy; and man is becoming defiled and corrupt.

How shall I live in the midst of this? I’m to live for the glory of God, for my love for each other and for Him to abound in knowledge and in all discernment in me that I might be able to discern the things that are different. I should have an active love that will be sincere in character, without offense in life and be filled with the fruits of righteousness for His glory. And I’m to do this so until the day of Christ, when He shall come for us.

Read this book of Philippians, will you? And you be a blessing today to somebody. Be a blessing to others today.

And the Lord richly bless you for His name’s sake.

Day 7

Philippians 1:12-19

Good-day, friends. We again come to you and we rejoice in the privilege and, shall I say, the honor of sitting down and talking with you about the things of Christ and the possibility that men and women in this generation can so live for God that He would be glorified in all that we are and all that we do.

Remember that the book of Philippians is a book of Christian experience. I would like to give you one verse for each chapter which gives you the key to this book. In chapter one, verses 20 and 21, what is Christian experience? That Christ be magnified in my body whether it be by life or by death, for to me to live is Christ, and to die (or to be with Christ) is gain. So whether I live or whether I die, just so long as Christ is magnified in my body.

In chapter two verse 5, what is Christian experience? "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind of Christ Jesus operating in a believer's life is Christian experience. And he gives us a three-fold illustration of that in the chapter with Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus.

In chapter 3 verse 10, what is Christian experience? "I count everything but loss, that I might know Him." This is to know Him experimentally, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering.

In chapter 4 what is Christian experience? "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Take all four chapters, Christ is the center. Of course, it has to be Christ as the center of our lives if we are to have a real Christian experience.

Now, we're in chapter one. We've just finished studying the prayer of Paul in verse 9 down through verse 11. And now we come to the next thought in the passage, Paul's rejoicing in his bonds. I can't help but think of this when I think of Paul. He was rejoicing in these dear saints in dealing with the unchanging purpose of God in His people, the unbreakable promise of God to His people, and of how he had suffered for the Gospel. He rejoiced that these people were the fruit of the Gospel.

And now he rejoices when he's in jail because people are hearing the Gospel. For, you remember, when Paul wrote his book of Philippians he was in prison. And a man called Nero was on the throne. He was a terrible character. And yet, though Nero is running the thing and Paul is in jail because he loved the Saviour, yet he takes the time out to rejoice because Christ is preached.

Will you notice verses 12 and 13. Here's a man who was bodied-down, but spirit-free. Can I repeat that? Paul is in chains. He's bodied-down. But his spirit is free. And he writes.

1:12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel;

1:13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places.

Let me just take these two verses. Here's the reason for his joy. Here's a man, I say, in chains. And the reason for his joy is that many have heard of Christ who otherwise would not have heard. When you come to chapter four, verse 22, you find that there were some in Caesar's household who heard the word of God; "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." What if Paul had not been in jail? How would the household of Nero have ever heard of the Gospel? Isn't that a marvelous thing?

Do you take your circumstances, my friend, which are very, very difficult, and use them to bring the Gospel to somebody else? I've oftentimes tried to visualize this. Here Paul is chained to guards. Each day possibly the guard is changed. And possibly, some of these guards were the noted Praetorian guards. And here he is chained to men. And his very bonds led to a wider proclamation of the Gospel. Even if he is going to be in prison, he's going to use that for the furtherance of the Gospel. And because of that, he would rejoice.

So, my friend, wherever you go, wherever you are, Christ should be preached. That's why you are where you are. But God wants you to be faithful in your ministry. I'm sure there must have been a real joy in Paul's heart where one day, some new guards came on. He'd never met them

before. And he was chained to them. Now, they can't get away from Paul, and Paul can't get away from them. My, what an opportunity to give them the Gospel. He's chained to them, and he can't get away.

You know in my early ministry, I used to drive a little Ford car, a little roadster up in the prairies of Canada. Sometimes I would follow a prairie trail. And once in a while when I'd be leaving the town where I was staying, some of the farmers would come up alongside and say, "You going out to a certain place to hold a meeting tonight?"

I'd say, "Yes."

"Do you mind if I ride out home with you? Maybe ten, fifteen miles out to there?"

"Sure, jump in."

There was only room for two of us in this little roadster. And as I say there were no trails, and in those days we had no foot accelerator. We just had the hand gasoline to feed your car. And when we'd get on the road, I'd open the throttle full wide and away we'd go. They'd hang on for dear life, and I'd preach the Gospel to them. They couldn't get out of the car. By the way, they didn't ask for a second ride. But at least they came the once.

So, it is here with Paul, chained. Did you ever chain yourself to anybody and in love and in grace minister to them the things of Christ?

I've often times thought of John Bunyan. You take some of the great works of John Bunyan. He's a man who was in jail because he preached the Gospel of the grace of God. While he was in jail, he wrote "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners" and other works.

John Bunyan was in Bedford jail. He couldn't get out and couldn't preach, so he got down and wrote these wonderful, wonderful things to the people of God wherever they were. I tell you, my friend, God arranges the circumstances. He's over all circumstance. He permits certain circumstances for His own glory and for your good and my good. The trouble is we don't rejoice in our circumstances.

And here in this case, Paul is so happy. My, what an opportunity to preach Christ, even in the palace. As I said a moment ago, his very bonds led to a wider proclamation of the Gospel. And as I say, if being in prison leads to the furtherance of the Gospel, says Paul, that's where I'll be—in prison. I'll rejoice, so long as people hear the Gospel. "I would that ye should understand, brethren that the things which happened unto me have

fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places (5:12-13). You see, I repeat it, he rejoiced because he had the opportunity of being bound for Christ, that he might proclaim Christ. I'd suggest that we must be faithful in our witnessing.

Do you remember in Luke 24 Jesus said, "You are witnesses of these things." In Acts 1:8, "The Spirit of God is going to come upon you and you'll be my witnesses." Witnesses of Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. And 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Listen, friend, God has put you where you are that you might be a witness for Him. I know the job might not be very good, and circumstances are certainly far from being very heavenly. You may be frail in body, you don't feel so well, and the children cause you to have headaches, and I don't know what the score may be. But wherever you are, whoever you are, if you really love the Saviour, use your circumstances as an opportunity of bearing testimony for Him.

There are so many false witnesses, so many doctrines around today. How we need those of us who love the Saviour—how we need to preach Christ.

Now, in verses 14 to 19, he goes on to say, he rejoiced because Christ was preached, irrespective of circumstances. Not only do I have the opportunity of witnessing in the palace, but "many of my brethren waxed confident by my bonds and are much more bold to speak the word without fear," (verse 14) The very fact that I was witnessing in the prison to the household of Caesar gave them courage to go on out and preach the Gospel wherever they were without fear. And he goes on to say,

1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

1:16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: (Hoping I will suffer more for it)

1:17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel.

1:18 What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation (that is, my deliverance from prison) through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Will you notice please here, he rejoiced as long as Christ is preached. He praised God as long as people were hearing about his Saviour. It's not so much the result that counts, but what is pleasing to God. And God is pleased when His people talk about His Son.

Do you want to praise the Lord?

Paul says, “**My message** was a savor of life unto life or of death unto death, a sweet savor of Christ in them that believe, of judgment to those who did not believe.” (2 Corinthians 2:16). Whether you see people saved or not, we should witness and leave the results with God. But He wants us to witness. Whatever the circumstances, whatever the afflictions, whatever the sorrow, whatever the storm may be, God wants you to bear testimony for His Son. He's not going to send angels to do it. He sends you and me. And this man Paul, even though some hated him and thought to try and add to his bonds, to his suffering, he rejoiced that Christ was being preached. People heard about his Saviour.

Oh, that we might be so filled with the desire that people might hear about our Saviour and thus come to know Him and be saved. Maybe today, God will give you the opportunity of bearing testimony for Him in some way, just a kind word or a kind deed, and in some way bring to them the wonderful love of Christ.

And the Lord richly bless you today for His name's sake.

Day 8

Philippians 1:14-21

Good-day, friends. We're in a study of the book of Philippians, the book of Christian experience. And we're in chapter one and I've been reading with respect to the Apostle Paul's rejoicing in his bonds because Christ is preached, verses 14 to 19. And if I might again repeat one or two things here in verse 14,

1:14 Many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Remember Paul is in prison. Nero, that wicked emperor is on the throne. And Paul has suffered a great deal for the Gospel's sake. He is chained to Roman soldiers, and he's had the opportunity of witnessing to them concerning the Saviour. In fact, if he had not been in bonds in the prison or in the palace, he wouldn't have had the opportunity of witnessing to those in Caesar's court, Caesar's palace. Because when you come to the end of the book, he thanks God for these of Caesar's household. It may be some of the Praetorian guard who were chained to him day after day. But whatever the thing was, whatever the score was, the Apostle Paul took the opportunity even in jail, being chained, to bear testimony of his wonderful Saviour.

You couldn't be in Paul's presence very long before he would talk to you about his Saviour. Would indeed that we had more today who were filled with the same passion, the same love for the Saviour, and the same yearning that somebody else might know of the wonders of His love, His tenderness, His compassion, and His grace. And now, Paul writes and says,

1:14. And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

1:15. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

1:16. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

1:17. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel.

1:18. What then? Notwithstanding, (it makes no difference to me), every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; And I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

1:19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation (deliverance) through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

He praised God because people were hearing about his Saviour. And I wish that I could in some way put into your heart, Christian friend, and in my heart, for I need it too, this great burning passion that in some way people might know about our Saviour. What a wonderful Saviour He is. He not only saves us from sin and fits us for the presence of God, but He brings us into a personal relationship with Himself so that His life becomes our life and so that one of these days we shall stand in His presence just like Him.

No wonder Paul preached. No wonder Paul rejoiced that men were hearing about his Saviour.

And then in verse 19 you have his perfect assurance of deliverance from prison. As far as we know, the Apostle Paul was delivered from prison and went out again, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. But mark his confidence. "I know that this shall turn to my salvation."

What? What is happening in the palace? It means that God has used those of Caesar's household who heard the word of God and took Christ as Saviour together with the prayers of God's people and the supply of the Spirit of Christ to bring deliverance to Paul.

It's a wonderful thing. God always works at both ends. Did you know that?

Do you remember in chapter 10 of the book of Acts, where Peter is down at Joppa. And here is Cornelius a Roman centurion up at Caesarea. Now, God wants Cornelius the Roman centurion to hear about His Son. How's He going to do it? There's nobody in Caesarea that we know of who knew the Saviour. And Peter, the great apostle of Christ, is down there at Joppa. So, the Lord just works at both ends. He worked on Peter's heart at Joppa. And he worked on the house of Cornelius, on Cornelius's heart. And

Cornelius one day had a vision from God that he should send men to Joppa and call for one, Simon Peter, and “he’ll come and tell you words whereby you and your household shall be saved.”

In the meantime, the Spirit of God deals with Peter. He says, “Peter, I want you to go down, there are some fellows that are waiting for you. And you go with them, nothing doubting.”

And he went with these men to Caesarea and met with Cornelius. Cornelius told him what he wanted. And God got them both together. God always works at both ends.

The Lord doesn’t work haphazardly as you and I do. God knows what He is doing. Every detail is known to Him. In fact, if we read in the scriptures, He numbers our steps (Job 14:16). He bottles our tears (Psalm 56:8). He counts the hairs of our head (Matthew 10:30). Our times are in his hands (Psalm 31:15). The very littlest, smallest detail of your life is under his gaze. He knows.

And Paul could say with assurance, “I know that because of your prayers, and the Spirit of Christ, I’m going to be delivered.” What a wonderful cooperation, by the way, between God and His Son and His people—Paul in prison, the people of God praying, and the Spirit of Christ working. And Paul is sure with such a combination that he’s going to be set free. And he was! This always amazes me the way God works. He always does the right thing. He’s always on time.

My friend, listen. The marvelous thing is that God wants you and me to co-operate with Him.

As James said in Acts 15, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (verse 28). Cooperation.

Again, I repeat what I’ve been saying. Why don’t we Christians make ourselves available to God so that He through the Spirit of God can work in us and through us to His own praise and His own glory. So thus far in the chapter, in the first chapter, we’ve had Paul’s thanksgiving. We’ve had Paul’s prayer, Paul’s confidence. We’ve had Paul’s longing after them, and his prayer that their love may abound, that they may be able to discern the things that are different, that they might be sincere in character, without offense in walk till the coming of the Lord, that they might live to the praise of His glory.

And then he rejoiced that everything that had come into his life was for the furtherance of the Gospel. And even those who were opposed to him, though they talked about the Saviour in pretense, not in sincerity, nevertheless, people were hearing about His Son, God's Son. This gave Paul great rejoicing and his certainty that he'd be delivered from prison.

Now, we come on in the chapter to his purpose in life. His purpose in life is rejoicing because, although he's in his bonds, people have heard of the Saviour, that Christ was preached. We have his assurance of deliverance and now his purpose in life, verses 20-21. Here is an amazing passage of scripture.

1:20. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

1:21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Or to die is to be with Christ.

Now, here is the purpose of Paul in his life. One is reminded of the verse again in Galatians 2:20, "I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me." In 2 Corinthians 5:9, "Being ambitious to be found pleasing to Him." And what is his purpose? That "whether by life or whether by death, Christ may be magnified in my body." That's why he in Philippians 3:10 could say, "I count everything but loss, just to know Christ, just to be found in Him." And Colossians 3, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear," and so on (Colossians 3:1, 3, 4a).

You see this man Paul recognized only one life and that was Christ. You remember in John 1:4 it says, "In him was life." Jesus said, "I have the water of life." I'll give you eternal life. I'll give you satisfying life. I'll give you resurrection life. I'll give you an abundant life. I'll give you everything you need with respect to life; and because I live, you shall live also.

This is an astounding thing! It's an amazing thing. Here is a man or a woman, bound by sin, shackled by sin, and somebody comes along and tells them about a Saviour who can deliver them from sin and in a moment their lives are transformed. They've got a new life with new hope and new

aspirations. This is why some people don't understand young Christians. You see they've known them as those who drank cocktails and danced, and the rest of that. I'm not going into the rest of that. It's neither here nor there, except that their lives are changed. They're not the ones they were before. They've got a new life.

That is this man Paul, who was before a blasphemer, not an evangelist. He was a persecutor; now he's a lover. He was afar off; now he is made nigh. What a transformation! No wonder he could say whether I live or whether I die makes no difference, just so long as Christ is magnified in my body.

"For to me to live is Christ, to die is gain." In other words, his entire passion was Christ, not a dogma, not a creed, not an organization. But a person.

You know, I have met people who are more concerned about their organization than they are about the Saviour. I'm not. I don't care about your organization. I'm not opposed to it. The thing I'm concerned about is Christ. This is the important thing. Whether I live, says Paul, or whether I die makes absolutely no difference. The one main passion of my life is Christ. To live, I'm going to manifest Christ. If I die, I'm going to be with Christ. And what's the difference whether I live or whether I die, just so long as Christ is magnified in my body.

Oh, God give to us a passion like this.

Are you in love with the Saviour?

Are you—in love—with the Saviour?

You say, "Mr. Mitchell, how can I get this?"

My friend, the only one way I know is to get into the Word of God and walk in fellowship with your Saviour. This will be growth.

It won't come overnight. It's not going to come in five minutes or five hours. This is growth.

God give to you and me a vision of Christ Himself.

Fall in love with Him.

And may you start today to be in love with Christ.

And the Lord bless you.

Day 9

Philippians 1:20-24

Good-day, friends. Again it gives me real joy, and I might say, blessing in having this privilege again of talking to you. I am more and more convinced that people today need to know the Word of God. How else can we know the purpose of God? How else can we know the things of God or even the very character of God apart from the Word of God? And we read in the Psalms that the entrance of God's Word gives light. And faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Hence, it's our great joy to come to you with this in our study in the book of Philippians.

Now, we're in Philippians chapter one, and I would again like to read from verse 20 down through verse 24.

- 1:20. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.
- 1:21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
- 1:22. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose, I wot not.
- 1:23. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better;
- 1:24. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

Now I have read this portion of scripture because it has to do with Paul's purpose in life and Paul's prospects for the future. In our last lesson, we were dealing with this, Paul's purpose in life in verses 20 and 21. I'm going to read the last part of verse 20 into 21: "that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body...for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

You see, the great purpose of his life was to live Christ. It made no difference to Paul whether he lived or whether he died. His one great passion was that Christ might be magnified in his body. One can't help but think of that when you remember Paul's own testimony in Galatians chapter

2, verse 20, when he said, "I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

You remember in Colossians chapter 3, verses 3 and 4, he could say, "We have died and our life is hid with Christ in God. And when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Or in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 9, where we read, if I may give the revised text there, "Being ambitious to be found pleasing to Him."

This man Paul had an entire passion for Christ. You can't read the Epistles and you can't read Paul's life without recognizing here was a man who was a specialist for Christ. Nothing else mattered, as long as Christ was magnified. If he lived, he was going to live for Christ. If he was going to die, he's going to be with Christ. So to him it made no difference whether he lived or whether he died, just as long as Christ was magnified.

I repeat his passion was a person, not a dogma, not a creed, not some religious organization, but a real, living person, the person of the Son of God, this one who has been exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.

You know it would be a wonderful thing in these days if we who are Christians, we who have taken Christ as our Saviour, could come to that place where Christ is always the center of attraction, where He would be the object of our devotion, of our affections, of our love, the theme of our song, the theme of every message, Christ Jesus.

You know, one time a fellow said to me, "You know, Mr. Mitchell, God has more for you than you've got."

And I had to tell him, "I have everything that is necessary in Christ."

I wish in some way people could realize the kind of a Saviour we have. I was talking to a young lady, and she said, "Isn't there more to it than just believing on Jesus Christ as Saviour?"

"Well," I said, "what more can you do to be saved?"

Now, the question of fellowship, the question of service is another thing. I'm talking about this matter of life. How do you receive life? What can I do to receive life? Nothing! When a person is dead in trespasses and sin, what he needs is life. But how are you going to get life? Through relationship to Jesus Christ. And when you and I accepted Christ as Saviour, He became our life. We not only had eternal life and resurrection life, but we read in John chapter 3:36, "He that hath the Son of God hath life."

And in 1 John chapter 4 we have the same picture in verses 10, 11 and 12. To have the Son of God is to have life.

And John chapter 1, verse 4, says, "In Him is life."

Jesus could say, "I am the way, the truth, and *the life!*" (John 14:6). And when a person comes into relationship with Jesus Christ, he receives life, His life. In fact, He becomes our life. That's what Paul is talking about. Not a dogma, I repeat it, not a dogma, or creed, or some religious organization, but a person. Christ is the center. All Paul's living and working and dying, all was for Christ.

You know he was a prisoner. Don't forget this. Paul was a prisoner in jail. He was in Rome. He was in jail because of his love for Christ. He could say in Ephesians chapter 4 and also chapter 3, "Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Ephesians 3:1) and that was why he was in jail, a prisoner, chained to soldiers. He couldn't go where he wanted to go. He couldn't do what he wanted to do. He was chained to soldiers. And yet, in the frailty of his flesh he could say, "Whether I live or whether I die makes absolutely no difference. If I'm to be martyred for the glory of Christ, well, then good, as long as Christ is glorified through it."

In other words, it makes no difference whether we live or die, what we do, what we say as long as Christ is magnified. It's an amazing thing, this.

You know, there are some Christians who are weak and frail in their body. Some are sightless and helpless, but they are rejoicing in Christ. Their circumstances are not affecting their joy. This is victory! This is victory! I find other Christians who have strong, healthy bodies. They hardly know what an ache or a pain is. But they're not full of joy. They're not rejoicing in Christ. And that's defeat. You know, I'm tempted to say that over again. I have met Christians who are frail in body, who can't go out, who are shut in, some blind, many helpless. But they're rejoicing in the Saviour. Their circumstances do not affect their joy in Christ. I say this is victory.

On the other hand I see people with strong bodies, very strong bodies, healthy, and my, they're busy as can be. But they're not rejoicing in Christ. That's failure. That's defeat. And it's not confessing Christ or to being like Christ.

This is why the Spirit of God indwells Christians. And when you and I yield ourselves to the Spirit of God, the result is that His life is lived through

us. Allow me again to make some statements I've made so often and yet I feel like saying it. The life of Jesus Christ defies imitation. I meet a great many people who are trying to mimic Christ. He's their pattern. And that's all right. But remember, you could not live the life that Christ lived. He must live His life through you. And Christianity in reality is Christ living in and through His people.

I'm of the persuasion that when they called the believers in Antioch "Christians" (they were first called Christians at Antioch), I think it was because there was a revelation of Christ in their lives. Not so much in what they had to say, but their whole life was a revelation of the One who indwelled them. Their lives were a benediction to others. That was a joy to God. Their lives portrayed something of the very character of our Saviour.

You see, my Christian friend, what the world needs to see is Christ Jesus living in and through His people. And you and I become the channels. And God grant we might be like this man Paul whose very passion is Christ.

So what about people then? My friend, when your passion is Christ, then you will be filled with His compassion for lost men and women. There will be radiating through you something of the glory and sweetness of the character of Christ. Not in the sense of being reflectors of Christ. That's wonderful. But to radiate Christ. As Paul could say that he might be a sweet aroma unto God and men (2 Corinthians 2:15). That something of the sweetness of our Saviour would be revealed in you and me in our actions, in our words, in our very attitudes, in the very motives we have of being for the exaltation of Christ.

Don't you think this is what the world needs to see in us Christians? Not an empty life, not a selfish life, not an egotistical life, but the precious Son of God living out His life in and through us.

Now, a woman can do that taking care of her family wherever she is, in the kitchen, in the office, in the factory. Wherever we are, we're there as God's channel to reveal to the world our love for Him. And this will be displayed as we yield ourselves unto Him.

I just wanted to spend the time on that today. I just hope that will be a blessing to you.

May God grant to you and to me this passion for the person of Christ to be joined, not so much to a religious organization or to some dogma or to some creed. Now, these have their place. I'm not objecting to that. But what

I want is that Christ Himself might be the very center of all that we are and all that we do. And may the Lord make it very precious to you today.

Just start for today. You can't bring back yesterday. You're not projecting yourself into tomorrow. But today, can't you and I live for Jesus, today so that His life, His character, His beauty, His love, His tenderness, His compassion will be made manifest in your life and in my life? And thus, we shall become a benediction to others.

May this be your joy today. And the Lord wonderfully bless you for His name's sake.

Day 10

Philippians 1:20-24 (cont.)

Good-day, friends. And again it gives me another opportunity to have real joy in talking to you about our precious Saviour. Let us study Philippians chapter one, verses 20 down through verse 24. And I don't mind reading them over again. If you have your Bibles and your notebooks, just get them out and let us read together.

1:20. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

1:21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

1:22. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not.

1:23. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better;

1:24. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

Now, we were discussing in our last lesson that the purpose of Paul in his life was to magnify and glorify Christ. Now, in verse 21, he could say, "For to me to live is Christ." Nothing else, but Christ. He was a person living in relationship, in fellowship and exalting a Person.

I'm afraid in these last days most of us who are Christians and very active for the Lord are so occupied with the things of Christ and the things pertaining to the service of Christ, that sometimes we miss our fellowship in Christ. You see, Paul says, "I'm not sold out to a dogma, or a creed, or a religious organization, etc. My great passion is Christ." That's why he could say in Philippians chapter three, "This one thing I do," (verse 13). He was a specialist for Christ.

Now, what about his prospect, in verse 21, "to die is gain." You know, when I read that, I wonder what Paul had in mind. What a wonderful prospect! Whether I live or whether I die. To be saved by Christ is

wonderful. To walk with Christ, wonderful! But what about to die. What about leaving this scene? Nobody wants to die.

Paul said, “to die is gain.” What does he mean by that? My friend, this prospect has so captivated his heart that nothing else counts. As I said in the last lesson, he could say, “Whether I live, I’m going to be with Christ. And if I die, I’m going to be with Christ.” So what’s the difference? It’s a wonderful thing this, “to die is gain.” Or he goes on to say in verse 23, “To depart and to be with Christ is far better.” To live is wonderful, but to be with Christ is far better.

Did you even stop to think about this? Where do we Christians go when we leave this scene? Where do we go? Here I am getting up in years, possibly. What’s the future? What’s the future? I say, my friends, live, serve the Lord, die. Somebody else takes the place. They live so many years. They die. If the Lord should tarry, you and I will go the same way. Does it scare you? Are you full of fear?

My Christian friend, if you love the Saviour, do you know where you are going? I was asked this question yesterday, what would heaven be like?

And I said, “Well, the important thing is not getting to heaven. The important thing is to be sure you’re going to be there.” And one can be sure when one has come into the right relationship with the Saviour. He gives us eternal life. And when we leave this scene on earth, we go right into the very presence of the Lord.

Now, Paul here said, “I’m in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better; but to die is gain.” In 2 Corinthians chapter 5 he could say in verses 6 to 8, “Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” He could say in 2 Timothy chapter 4, verses 6 to 8, “The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. Therefore there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Dear Peter could say in 2 Peter chapter one, “the time of the putting off of my tabernacle is at hand” (verses 13 and 14). They were not sorrowful. They were rejoicing. I wonder if we have caught the same spirit of our Saviour.

Do you remember in John chapter 14, verses 27 and 28, where our Saviour said, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father;" If you only knew, said Jesus, what's on the other side, you would rejoice. Instead of being sorrowful, you'd be happy because I said, "I go to my Father."

Now, I think Paul caught a glimpse of this. And if I remember correctly, the Apostle Paul could say in 2 Corinthians, "I knew a man, whether in the flesh or not, who was caught up to the third heaven, He was caught up to paradise, and saw so many wonderful things which were not lawful for him to utter. And lest he become puffed up, because of the abundance of the revelation, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh," says Paul. "That I might not be puffed up beyond measure."

My, what is on the other side! Jesus said, "If you only knew, you would rejoice because I said, I go to my Father."

Paul could say, "I'm in betwixt two. I want to go to be with the Lord which is far better. But when I think of you folk in your need, I'd better stay down here." My, what a prospect. What a prospect! I wonder what kind of a prospect you have. To be with the Lord is far better.

Oh, when I think of this, exchanging faith for sight, exchanging frailty for power, exchanging weakness for strength, exchanging earth for heaven, exchanging a world that's under the domination of sin and entering into the presence of God where righteousness dwells. And one could make the contrast over and over again.

My friends, I think too many of us Christians have got our roots too deeply imbedded in the earth. You remember, in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew the Lord likens the believer to wheat. There's not much of wheat in the ground. Most of it is reaching up to heaven. And we Christians ought to be in that place where Christ so captivates us that there'll be a yearning.

Now, that sounds like a man who has got two feet already in heaven or in the grave, doesn't it? No, I'm trying to present to you today, there is something ahead of us that's so glorious and so wonderful that human language can't begin to express it. If you could only know, said Jesus. If you only knew what was in my Father's house. If you only knew what was on

the other side. If you only knew where I was going, you would rejoice. And Paul, I say, caught a glimpse of it. "To be with the Lord is far better."

It may be I'm talking to some Christians and you're very, very, weak in body and you're afraid of the future. Listen, don't be afraid. Jesus said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). He takes you by the hand. You see, he went through death. He tasted death for us. He went down into the very bowels of death, man's greatest enemy, man's last enemy. He went for the purpose of giving us victory and deliverance from death.

You see, when a Christian leaves here, he goes immediately into the presence of God. He doesn't go to purgatory or some other place. He doesn't go into a place of soul sleeping. He goes right into the very presence of God. And you know, I think the Psalmist must have had a little taste of this when he said, "In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).

And even dear Job in chapter 19 must have caught a glimpse of the glory when he said, "Though worms destroy this body, I shall yet in my flesh see God by my side. And when I see Him, He's not a stranger" (Job 19:26-27). And Paul says, "Absent from the body is present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). Isn't it wonderful that death and the grave are defeated!

My Christian friends, you may go through the shadow of death. But you don't go into death. We've been delivered from that! Our Saviour could say in John chapter 8, verse 51, "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." Although Christians die, they leave these bodies, that's true. But what about the man who lived in the body. What about you the person who lived in that body. You go immediately into the very presence of the living God.

Isn't it amazing that God should make it possible for men and women like you and me to be redeemed, to forgive us for every sin, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, to give us eternal life and declare to us we will never come into judgment but we'll come right into the very presence of God, acceptable. My friend, what a prospect!

What a prospect!

That's why Paul could say in verse 20, "Just as long as Christ is magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or whether it be by death." This is what cheered the early martyrs who embraced the flames when they were

being burned to death for Christ. They embraced the flames and praised the Lord and they went out into glory not cursing, not bitter, but rejoicing that they were going right now into the very presence of God. Something of this gripped the early church when they even longed for martyrdom because it meant they'd be in the presence of the living Saviour, their glorified Saviour. What a prospect.

What a prospect!

We live down here three score years and ten and if by reason of strength, fourscore years. You live eighty, ninety years of age and then what? And then what? My friend, for the man who has trusted in Jesus Christ, he goes right into the very presence of God to be glorified for the very glory of God.

And as Paul could say, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). That's our prospect. This is our hope. This is our hope. Good-night, earth. Good-morning, glory!

Do you have that hope today? Do you have that anticipation? Do you have that prospect? You can have it, my friends, by putting your trust in Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour.

Relationship with Christ means life and resurrection and eternal, satisfying life.

And I trust that those of you who are frail in body and perhaps you're not much of a prospect for the earth will remember that to be with the Lord is far better.

Revel in that today and rejoice in God your Saviour.

Day 11

Philippians 1:25-30

Good-day, friends. Isn't it wonderful these days that we can sit down for a few moments and listen to the Word of God and meditate together on the wonderful prospects that God has held toward us.

We've been discussing in our last few lessons in the book of Philippians, chapter one, that Paul's great passion is Christ. Christ is the very center of his affections, of his devotion, of his whole life. He is not occupied with some side issue, but with the person of Christ. And may I again say and I'm sorry to say this, but it's so true of most of us. We become so occupied with our service and our organizations and with what-have-you, that we've missed, missed, the joy of HIM, our Saviour and Lord.

You know in the book of Luke, chapter 10, at the end of the chapter, you remember Jesus going into the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus and how Martha was cumbered with much service and she asked the Lord to send Mary to help her. All Mary was doing was sitting down at His feet, and Martha was doing all the work. This was the implication. And of how the Lord Jesus said to Martha, "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her." Why? Mary sat at His feet for instruction. It's an amazing thing how we people who are Christians, shall I say, allow God's time that has been given to us to slip by day after day, year after year, and we grow so little in the things of Christ. Oh, that we might have more men like Paul who whether we lived or whether we died, only want Christ to be magnified.

We were dealing in our last lesson with this man's great passion and with the prospect that he had, that he would be with the Lord which was far better. Now, following this, you have the Apostle Paul giving to us an exhortation on steadfastness. Allow me to read now, from Philippians chapter 1, verse 25:

1:25. And having this confidence (having spoken of his purpose and of his prospect of being with the Lord) And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

1:26. That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

In other words, he wanted to live both that they in turn might be filled with joy and usefulness for the Saviour, and that their rejoicing might be more abundant in the Lord Himself.

Now from verse 27 on, he talks about practical Christianity. And here he really steps out to speak about how we as Christians ought to conduct our lives. It's an exhortation on steadfastness. Allow me to read verse 27 down through to the end of the passage—a very few words.

1:27. Only let your conversation (manner of life) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel;

1:28. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

1:29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

1:30. Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Now, may I just suggest in verse 27 that whatever happens, walk as though you expect to be with Christ. Walk as though you are preparing for glory. That's where we belong, and we're just down here doing a job for God. And when our job is done, we're going to go Home. In the meantime, how shall I live as a Christian?

So, he says, "Let your manner of life be as it becometh the gospel, so that whether I come and see you or not, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." I say, whatever happens, walk as though you expect to be with Christ.

You see, Philippi was a colony, and being a colony it was governed from Rome and protected by Rome. Indeed, all that Rome was was behind Philippi. And with that in mind, you could say, all that is for God, His power, His grace, His tenderness is behind His people. In other words, all

the forces of heaven are behind us as believers. Hence, walk as becometh the gospel of Christ. You see, we belong to heaven.

When you come to the third chapter, he could say in the 20th verse, "Our citizenship is in heaven." This is where we belong.

"Well, you say, "What in the world are we doing down here?"

Well, we're down here on business.

You say, "Well, that's all right for you preachers."

Just a minute. Every Christian is a minister of God. And we by our lives and by our words are either bringing glory and praise to God or just the opposite. And too often, we as Christians dishonor the name of the Lord by the way we act.

Now Paul is saying this. He has just given his own testimony that Christ be magnified. This is the great passion of his life. If by living he can glorify Christ, then let me live. And if I die and by my dying Christ is glorified, "then let me die. It makes no difference," says Paul. In other words, we Christians are bound for glory. Part of the purpose of God is to present you and me before Himself spotless.

As Romans 8:29 says, "God hath determined that we shall be conformed to the image of His Son." This is our prospect, that we're going to be just like Jesus; and by the way the apostle John makes the same statement in 1 John 3:2 when he says, "When we see Him, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is."

And even the Psalmist could say in the 17th Psalm, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness" (verse 15). This is the prospect of every Christian whether he knows it or not. You're going to stand in the presence of God just like the Lord Jesus. This is what thrilled the heart of Paul. He is going to share with Him in His glory.

That's what he could say in Romans 8:18. "I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." You see, he caught a glimpse of the glory, and nothing else mattered. Once he caught a glimpse of Christ in His righteousness and of the prospect ahead of him, nothing, nothing affected him down here, martyrdom or anything else. Circumstances did not rob him of his joy and blessing in the Saviour.

And remember again he wrote this while he was in chains and fetters in Rome, a prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. Months in jail, months

in jail. And by the way, their jails were not like they are here. These were jails of the first century with brutal jailors and terrible conditions. Yet he could rejoice in the Lord as I said the other day. This is victory. This is really victory. Circumstances don't alter the ground for your joy.

As he said in chapter 4, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (verse 4). But He wants our lives. We are to live our lives in view of the glory, in view of the prospects. I've said this before and I repeat it, and I say this reverently, that God will not be satisfied with you or me until we stand in His presence conformed to the image of His Son, to be just like the Lord Jesus. And God has purposed this. And because God has purposed this, it's going to be carried out. Hence, we rejoice whether we live or whether we die.

So, said Paul, "Let your manner of life be as it becometh the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether I come to see you, or whether I don't see you, I want to hear about your affairs and what I want to hear is that you're standing fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel. And don't be terrified that it produces suffering. Your stand for the Gospel is going to produce suffering."

Remember in Timothy he could say, "If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2:12). All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Now, that doesn't necessarily mean physical persecution. In Paul's day, it did. Some of these dear Christians were beheaded, had their eyes put out, their tongues pulled out, were burned at the stake, were thrown to wild animals and gladiators and so on. We don't go through that today. Our opposition is more subtle.

Satan has learned a lot of lessons. He knows that he can't stamp out the gospel by persecution. It is well said, that the martyrdom of Christians was the seed of the church. It grows. The more you persecute the Christians, the more they grow. It purifies and drives them to the Saviour. Satan is more subtle today. He gets us occupied with the things of the world. He gets us occupied with the materialistic philosophy of life. He gets us occupied with ourselves. He shuts up the testimony we might have toward men.

Satan hates Christ, hates the Word of God, hates the people of God, especially when they're trying to please Christ. So Satan is more subtle than he used to be. He's pretty wise. He is full of wisdom. He's subtle. And so he gets at you, but not by physical persecution.

If someone were to come to your room with a gun and say, “You either give up your faith in Christ or I’ll shoot you.”

You’d say, “Shoot away, brother, I’m not going to give up my faith in Christ.”

There will be a certain joy and honor in that. But Satan is more subtle today. You know what he does? He comes along with trickery. He gets you occupied with passing temporal things. He gets you occupied with yourself. He gets you occupied with the failure of others. He gets you full of criticism of other Christians. Anything, but Christ. Anything, but Christ. And the result is your testimony is thwarted. The Gospel of Christ doesn’t go out.

Think of the fact of the tremendous mass media of communication today, and that the great majority of the people of the world know nothing of Christ. See, he’s subtle. He knows that, if he persecutes the church, it’s going to purify the church and the testimony will be purer; and people will be saved.

Oh, God grant to us today that we will conduct our lives pleasing to Him as it becometh those who have been redeemed by precious blood, as becometh those who are going to stand in the presence of God conformed to His image.

You see, in view of the prospects, how shall I live? That’s why John says, “Everyone who hath this hope set on Him, purifies himself even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

And when I think of the prospects that are sure, that are good, that are certain, then how shall I conduct my life? As one who belongs to God in the midst of a world that’s opposed to Him. And circumstances are not going to change it. I’m going to live for God, aren’t you?

May the Lord bless you today. And may today be a day of joy and rejoicing for you because of your prospects of seeing the Saviour face to face.

And the Lord bless you for His name’s sake.

Day 12

Philippians 1:25-30 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We're still in chapter one at the end of the chapter. I trust that these few lessons thus far in Philippians will stir your heart to know what real Christian experience is.

Christian experience is the enjoyment of Christ. A Spirit-filled life is the enjoyment of divine life. And there's been so much distortion these days concerning these truths that people have missed the simplicity of it all and the wonder of it all that God expects us to be happy Christians, joyful Christians in spite of our circumstances.

Now, this is a supernatural thing. There is a place in Christ where one can be full of joy and rejoicing in that calmness, that peace that passeth all understanding in spite of our circumstances.

I've received mail from different ones at times, and I confess that if I were in their circumstances the Lord would have had to give me tremendous grace. But He would give the grace. And I'm always glad that He remembers my frame, that I am just dust (Psalm 103:14). And that He has promised never to leave me, nor to forsake me (Hebrews 13:5).

And Jesus could say, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). It's a marvelous thing, a wonderful thing to know that there's not a second of the day that the Lord Jesus ever leaves any one of His people. Even though they're in frailty and even though they fail God, He never leaves them. His name is faithful, and He still loves you. Even our failures and our frailties and our weaknesses do not affect the love of God for us. Oh, how glad I am for that! My love can get hot or can be cold or lukewarm. But His never changes. My, what a Saviour we have. What a Saviour we have! What a Lord we have.

And what a prospect He has given to us to be conformed to the image of Christ. To be with the Lord is far better, far better. What a prospect! And because of this, because we're bound for glory, because we're fitted for God's presence, because we're the children of One who is God, because we're going to become conformed to His image, He wants us to live as becometh the Gospel, to conduct our lives pleasing to God.

But such a life is going to bring persecution. It's going to bring opposition. And it will come in unexpected quarters. It may be in your own house, from your own family, from your neighbor. I don't know where it's going to come from, but there's going to be some opposition. I do not say that it's going to be physical. It could be and quite often it is just a slighting remark of criticism of God's people, that sarcasm, that cynical attitude, that declaration that those who believe the Bible and put their trust in Jesus have something wrong with them. It may come from any corner. However, listen to this. I'm reading from Philippians chapter one:

1:28. And in nothing be terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

1:29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

1:30. Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Don't be afraid of your adversaries. To them it is an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. You know, I'm going to take the time to read two or three passages of scripture. I know I'm talking to some possibly who have been opposed in their testimony, and they're getting discouraged. My friend, don't be discouraged! The common lot of God's people when they walk with God is opposition.

Allow me to read from the first book of Thessalonians chapter 2. Now, here is another church that suffered great persecutions. In fact, the Apostle Paul never went back to Thessalonica because he did not want to add to the persecutions and the sufferings through which they were going for Christ's sake. But he writes to them these words. I'm reading from chapter 2 of 1 Thessalonians, verse 14.

“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost” (verses 14-16).

See, they suffered, and yet, they were happy in the Saviour. And they had the same prospects that you have. They were looking for the coming of the Lord. They knew they were going to stand in the presence of God in all the beauty of Christ.

Now, in the second book of Thessalonians, the first chapter, allow me to read these words, starting in verse 4:

“So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you: And to you who are troubled rest with us (be patient), when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (verses 4-10).

You see, Paul here makes a contrast, when he says to you, your very opposition, your very suffering is a token that you belong to God. And that God is going to glorify you with His Son in that day. And to those who are causing the persecution, to those who oppose you, our God is going to come in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel.

To us Christians, it was suffering for our testimony's sake. It's an evident token that we belong to God. And, to those who trouble you, those who persecute you, to those who oppose you, it's an evident token of perdition. Perdition. You remember in 1 Corinthians chapter one verse 18, where Paul writes, “The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness. But unto us who are saved it is the power of God.” And those who look upon the message of the Gospel as being foolishness—it's an evident token that they belong to those who perish.

Just like we've said so often, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's proof to those who believe in Christ, God's proof to them that they have a salvation that's perfect, that's eternal, that's sure. But by the same token, the

resurrection of Jesus Christ is a guarantee of judgment to those who reject Him. You see, God makes a cleavage between the children of God and the children of wrath. And if you're a child of God and you're suffering for your testimony's sake, rejoice! It's another proof to you that you belong to God.

You remember in John chapter 15, reading from verse 18 on, where the Lord Jesus could say to His disciples, "If the world doesn't listen to me, it won't listen to you. If the world rejects my testimony, it will reject yours. If the world persecutes me, it will persecute you."

And he goes on into the sixteenth chapter when He says, "The time will come when he that killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And they'll do this because they know not the Father nor me" (John 16:2-3). You see, it's not an uncommon thing for a Christian to be persecuted. And, if you're walking before God, don't be surprised if you lose friends.

But may I say this, and I say this on the ground of personal experience, that for every one that I gave up, or should I put it the other way around, everyone that gave me up because of my love for the Saviour, God's given me ten more friends.

You know it's not a hard thing to witness for Christ. It's not a hard thing to give things up for Christ. It's not a hard thing to give up friends for Christ. The hardest thing is when the friends give up you. Then you know how much pride you've got.

I know that. I went through that. And you can lose friends because of your faith in Christ. But don't let that trouble you. God will make it up to you. God will never be in your debt, my friend. And if you lose friends because of your faith in Christ, then He's got some better friends for you.

Isn't it an amazing thing that you and I are the objects of His love? He permits these things to come into our lives to draw us closer to himself. So, you see, the very opposition, the suffering through which He makes you go because you love the Saviour is an evident token from God to you that you belong to Him and that eternal glory is for you. Also, it is an evident token of judgment and perdition to those who oppose the Gospel. So may I say in closing today. It's a wonderful thing to belong to the Saviour.

And let us not be cold in our testimony. Let us not draw back in our witnessing for the Saviour because of opposition. You can expect opposition. But please don't make it so that you must have opposition.

Now, I know Christians who do things because they expect to have opposition and they glory in their opposition when they themselves have caused the opposition, not their love for the Saviour. They wanted to be in the limelight. I'm not talking about that sort of a thing.

Right in your home, right at the job where you work, in the factory or in the office, wherever it may be, wherever you are, whatever you do, live a faithful, consistent life for God. Don't worry about other things.

You ask, "Do I have to preach to people?"

Not a bit of it! I'd rather you'd live for Christ. And when you live for Christ and you walk in fellowship with Him, your own life will be a testimony of the transforming power of God. And whatever the circumstances may be, you're going to live for Christ; so that, whether by life or whether by death, Christ will be magnified in your body.

This is it—that Christ Jesus will be the very center of your affection and devotion and the theme of your testimony.

May you have joy today in Him.

And the Lord bless you for His name's sake.

Day 13

Philippians 1 Summary

Good-day, friends. Before we leave chapter one of Philippians, there are one or two things I want to say to you to refresh your memories.

You remember we had finished chapter one and Paul's great testimony was to live for Christ. This is Christian experience. And to die is to be with Christ. This is the Christian hope. And as we've been thinking through this chapter, to me it's been an amazing thing how this man Paul had a passion for the Son of God. Indeed, he was a specialist for Christ.

Before we leave this first chapter, I want you to mark the great place the Gospel has in the heart of this man Paul. Notice in verse 5 where he speaks,

1:5. For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now.

He had just said, "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, because of your fellowship in the Gospel, the first day until now." Paul reveled in the fellowship of the Gospel with God's people.

Now, in verse 7,

1:7. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

Not only is there the fellowship in the Gospel, but there's the defense and confirmation of the Gospel of which we are partakers. It's an amazing thing, and by the way may I remind you that this word Gospel means 'good news from God,' that God has good news for men; and the only way we have arranged for this good news for men is through ourselves who have received the good news.

God has good news for men. Men and women are dead in trespasses and in sins. They are without light. They are far from God. They have no hope for eternity. There's no way whereby they can be delivered from the

penalty and guilt of sin. Every thing that man does is a sign of rebellion against God.

So God has some good news. What man could not do, God has done. Man can not save himself. It is impossible for man to save himself. Only God can do that.

This is called “good news” and, my friend, it is really good news, good news to men in sin. God has made a provision to give them eternal life, to bring them into relationship with Himself, to put away their sins, and to guarantee that they will stand in His presence conformed to the image of the One who died for them, even Jesus Christ. That’s what is in Paul’s mind in the passage we have in verse 5, “We thank God for their fellowship in the Gospel.” In verse 7, “In the defense and the confirmation of the Gospel, they were all partakers of His grace.”

And then you go on down to verse 12.

1:12. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.

Even my persecution, even my imprisonment has meant the furtherance of the Gospel. And as he goes on to say, “Whether they preach Christ in contention or preach Him in love, in reality, as long as Christ is preached—as long as they hear the good news from God concerning His Son,” he was content. So he talks here of the furtherance of the Gospel.

And then, you come to verses 16 and 17,

1:16. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

1:17. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.

I am set for the defense of the good news. I’m here for one purpose that the good news concerning God’s love for man shall go forth. And then you go way down to verse 27,

1:27. Only let your conversation (manner of life) be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.

And whether I come to see you or whether I don't, I want to know how you are getting along, that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel. In other words, cooperate together and so live that nothing will hinder the Gospel's going forth and that each one will walk in the light of the Gospel by faith.

So in verse 5 we read of fellowship in the Gospel. In verse 7 the defense and confirmation of the Gospel. In verse 12, he talks about the furtherance of the Gospel. In verse 17, "I am set for the defense of the Gospel." And two things in verse 27, I'm to live as it becometh the Gospel, and I'm to strive together for the faith of the Gospel. I just suggest this to you for your thinking.

It struck me very forcibly as I read this first chapter how often the Apostle Paul brought forth this question of the Gospel. He was martyred just because of the good news from God to man. Oh, that we today might be filled with the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ so we can pass it on to somebody else. Good news from God to men.

And I'm astounded as I talk to people about the Gospel how little they know about God's provision. How distorted an idea they have of the good news.

I had one speak to me just yesterday, and say, "Well, Mr. Mitchell, certainly if I keep the Ten Commandments, I'll go to heaven, won't I?"

I said, "NO. In the first place you don't keep them, do you?"

He said, "NO."

"Do you know of anybody who keeps them?"

He said, "No."

Then why were the Ten Commandments given?"

The commandments were not given to save you. The Ten Commandments were not given to make you good. The Ten Commandments do not make you good. The commandments are demands—what you should be—and they give you no power to keep them. The law was given, not to save, but to reveal to us how frail, how weak, how sinful we are. Man in his condition, apart from Christ, can't keep the commandments. Oh, the impossibility of it.

That's why Paul here in the first chapter of Philippians talks continually about the good news, the good news. It's not the Law. The Law is not good news. You don't know anybody who was saved by keeping the Law. Nobody was ever saved by keeping the Law. Nobody kept the Law.

There was only One who ever could say that He was sinless, and that was Jesus Christ, God's wonderful Son.

No, the Law reveals how bad I am. The Law reveals how weak I am, how helpless I am. And as Paul could say, "The law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ. . . . But after that faith is come (and having come to Christ), we are no longer under a school-master" (Galatians 3:24-25). You see, what I'm after here is the good news from God. And Paul is so determined, "whether it be by life or by death" as long as Christ is magnified, that the good news concerning Christ may go forth.

So he rejoiced in the fellowship of the Gospel with other saints. He was set for the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, and even his very suffering and persecution was for the furtherance of the Gospel. And, now, may you live as Christians so that your manner of life will be such as becometh the Gospel and so that ye may strive together for the faith of the Gospel and good news concerning His wonderful Son.

You know, I hate to leave this first chapter because it's so pregnant with truth. How practical. We see that the Apostle Paul had one great desire that Christ be magnified not only in him, but in every other Christian.

Why do you think God left us on earth?

Have you ever stopped to think why didn't God take us Home the moment we were saved?

My, friend if He had done that from the beginning there wouldn't have been any testimony to go forth. We would never have known about Christ. He leaves us down here to magnify Christ in our life and to transform us—not to live a reformed life, but a transformed life by the Spirit of God who is living in us. And then He wants us to be His witnesses, to live as the children of God in the midst of a world that's full of the children of wrath.

And He wants us to have that passion for His Son and the prospect of standing in His presence conformed to the image of His Son. We'll be just like Him.

I say, "What a prospect." What a prospect! No wonder I repeat it. Paul says, "Whether I die or I live, it makes absolutely no difference to me,

as long as Christ be magnified.” If I’m persecuted, if it’s for the furtherance of the Gospel, all right I’ll be persecuted. And I want you Christians to so live and so walk and so act that your very actions and your words, and your very attitude and your motives, everything will be for the furtherance of the Gospel. That mankind may hear the good news from God to men.

And again may I say what I’ve so oftentimes said. You must acknowledge that if God is going to save people, He’s got a right to say what that way is. If God wants to give eternal life to people, He’s got a right to say from what ground you can receive that eternal life. If God is going to fit people for eternal glory, God has a right to say how He’s going to do it.

And all that man says, and all that man does is not going to help the situation one little bit. We must take our place as sinners needing a Saviour. And our job, for those of us who have accepted Christ, is to so walk before God as becometh the Gospel of the grace of God concerning His Son so that people will be attracted to the Saviour. This is it, my friends. This is a life of joy. This is the life of blessing. This is the life of satisfaction. It’s the life of peace. It’s the life of usefulness. It’s the only life that’s worth anything, and it carries on through into eternity.

So yield yourself to Him, our Saviour and Lord, that the Spirit of God will reveal Him to you and through you today. So that when you meet your friends and your neighbors, your very attitude to them and your very walk, your words, and your whole deportment will be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.

Let us live as the children of One who is God so that His name and His grace will be known among men.

I repeat it again. When talking to people, which I have the opportunity of doing day after day, week after week, month after month, I’m continually amazed to find refined, educated people knowing so little of the good news from God. In fact, most of the time, they’ve got a distorted idea as to what God has done for them. And how can they know unless we Christians tell them.

Now, you live today in fellowship with your Saviour and let Him use your tongue and your actions and your life and your home and all that you are for the glorifying of Christ through you to men and women.

And the Lord bless you for His name’s sake.

Day 14

Philippians 2:1-5

Good-day, friends. We come to you again with our studies in the book of Philippians, the book of Christian experience. In the first chapter, to live Christ is a Christian experience. To die and be with Christ, this is the Christian's hope. In chapter one the great key is in verses 20 and 21, that Christ be magnified in my body. Here is Paul, a man with a passion for Christ, who didn't mind whether he lived or died as long as Christ was magnified in his body, in his life.

The key of chapter 2 is verse 5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." When the mind of Christ is operating in a believer's life, he will experience real Christian life. So that whatever the circumstances may be, whether they're rough or smooth or whether they're difficult and hard, whatever it is, Christian experience is the life, the mind of Christ operating in us.

You know it says in the Scriptures, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). We find this in chapter 2. Notice how Paul starts this chapter:

- 2:1. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels (compassions) and mercies,
- 2:2. Fulfill ye my joy, (fill up my joy) that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
- 2:3. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.
- 2:4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.
- 2:5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

The first two verses tell us of things we should have: "consolation in Christ, comfort of love, compassions and mercies." Paul is telling these Philippians, "You fill up my joy. See that my joy is filled full because of your relationship to Christ and your relationship to me. And if there is any comfort of love, and fellowship in the Spirit, any compassion and mercies,

then you fill up my joy. I want my joy to be filled full.” And he goes on to say,

2:2b. Having the same love, being of one accord, and of one mind.

He wants to have the same love, the same mind, the same accord. The Psalmist says, “It is a wonderful thing for brethren to dwell together in unity” (133:1).

You know, if ever we needed this passage, we need it today. We see so much division and confusion and lack of joy in the presence of Christians, one wonders how the Word of God is ever going to get out. The man of the world, the unsaved man looks at Christians and he sees confusion. He sees fightings and bickerings and what have you. There's not that unanimity of Spirit and purpose that ought to be there in individual Christian assemblies. Even among evangelicals and our local churches, there's often not that oneness of Spirit, that oneness of love, that oneness of heart, the same great purpose in life.

I do not know of anything that grieves the Spirit of God more than this. I do not know of anything that would rob God's people more than this. Divisions, separations—we have a chip on our shoulder. We carry a plank instead of a chip, and we're so sensitive, so touchy that it's a rare thing to find a group of men and women who love the Saviour with one mind, one heart, the same kind of a love one for the other. This is what we should have.

It's a wonderful thing when God's people get together. It's a wonderful thing when the leaders of a church get together having the same purpose. And then in verses three and four, we find things we are to avoid. What shall I avoid? Well, let's look at it.

2:3. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

2:4. Look not every man on his own things.

What does he mean by that? Well, don't look after yourself. Look out for the other man. Don't be selfish in the things you do. Do things to help the other fellow. Look at it—strife, vain glory which is self esteem, self seeking. Don't seek the pre-eminence. These are the things we are to avoid.

“Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Mitchell, that you see strife and vain glory and selfishness and self-esteem and self-seeking among God’s people?”

Yes, I’m afraid that’s so. One doesn’t have to go very far to see it. This is the tragedy. This is what hinders the moving of the Spirit of God in our midst.

You remember in the early church they were all with one accord in one place (Acts 2:1). Their hearts were occupied with Christ. You see, in the first chapter of Philippians Paul is telling his own experience, his own yearning, his own passion for the Saviour. And he’s speaking about his own prospects and the prospects of every believer of seeing the Saviour face to face and being like Him. And because of the fact that we’re one in Christ and because we’re going to live together for eternity and because we’re all going to be transformed by the Spirit of God to be like Christ Jesus, how should we live down here? How should we live down here?

Do you think that God is going to divide heaven into different sections for different kinds of people? Oh no, by no means.

You say, “Mr. Mitchell, I know when we get to heaven we’re all going to be changed.”

Yes, you’re going to be changed and I’m going to be changed. But, my friends, why not enjoy some of that down here? Why wait till we get to heaven? In fact, I’ve been with people where they kind of resented this idea.

I remember one time, being in a Bible conference. I was preaching on the coming of the Lord.

And after the meeting was over, a lady came to me and she said, “You know, Dr. Mitchell, isn’t it wonderful when the Lord comes, Mrs. So and So is going to be changed.”

And I said, “Yes, that’s a wonderful thing. But I can tell you something even more wonderful than that.”

And she said, “What’s that?”

I said, “Why, you’re going to be changed!”

And you know, when I saw her face, I hurried up and said, “And I can tell you something better than that.”

She said, “What’s that?”

“Well,” I said, “I’m going to be changed.” I said that in self-protection. You see, we always acknowledge that the other fellow should be changed.

My friend, we're all going to be changed, everyone of us, even the Apostle Paul. Only Jesus Christ, our precious Saviour, is the One who's altogether lovely. He's the only One who is perfect. He's the only One. The very energy of His heart is love for men and women.

And the closer that you and I walk with the Saviour, the more we realize our need of being of the same mind and having the same love, the same purpose. We're to avoid as far as possible all strife, all self-esteem. That's pretty hard, isn't it? And yet, we're told to esteem each other "in lowliness of mind" better than ourselves. Apparently, there were those in the church at Philippi who were not of the same mind. They were full of self-esteem, self-seeking and seeking the pre-eminence.

Oh, the divisions among God's people. And as 1 Corinthians chapter 3 says, it's a sign of carnality (verse 3). Now, I believe in divisions if we're divided on the question of truth. I think we ought to stand for the truth of God. We can't have any fellowship with a man who denies the deity of Christ. But the sad thing is oftentimes that churches are divided on personalities. I don't like this fellow, and I don't like the other fellow.

So, we have our likes and dislikes even among God's people. Shame on us! Let nothing be done in strife or vain glory. Let us manifest the spirit of humility, not of self-esteem, not self seeking but that for the good of others. This is a good exhortation.

And I want to say that the Gospel of Christ and the Word of God would go forth far more to our present generation if we Christians lived this way. Instead of saying, "See how they love each other," sometimes the world says, "See how they fight each other."

And often, when I'm dealing with unsaved men, they will bring up some Christian, some person who claims to be Christian, who possibly is, but whose life is not paralleling what he believes. And he has become a stumbling block, a stumbling stone in the presence of those who may want to be saved.

God give us to be men and women of God, walking in humility of mind, looking out for the other fellow's joy and blessing, not to be an egotist or full of self-esteem and self-assertion and self-seeking. We are to avoid this.

How can I do it? Verse 5 is the answer,

2:5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

The example of Christ is given to us with respect to how we should live. When the mind of Christ is operating in us, it produces that supernatural walk that will glorify God and bring praise to man. When one is humble in mind, he is humble in life. The mind of Christ is the mind of meekness and humility.

This makes a fellow want to get down in the dust before God and ask that the Spirit of God will so take over that our lives will be a benediction to others and a praise and a worship to God.

May God grant to you and to me today to live in fellowship and in the blessing of our Saviour, not self-seeking, but seeking the glory of God and the good of others.

Day 15

Philippians 2:5-8

Good-day, friends. We come to you again with our Bible studies in the book of Philippians, chapter 2. And you'll forgive me, I trust, if I refresh your heart with a little of what we studied in our last lesson.

In the first two verses of chapter two, we find things we should have—the same mind and the same love and the same accord. And then in verses 3 and 4, we were taking up the things we should avoid as Christians—strifes, self-esteem, self-seeking. We are not to seek the pre-eminence but are to push up the other man. Above all, we're to be humble in our mind, in our relationship the one to the other. And when one is humble in mind, then he or she is humble in life.

And then we have verse 5 which is the key of the passage:

2:5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

In other words, when the mind of Christ is operating in us, in our life, this is Christian experience. That is, when the mind of Christ takes over in chapter one, Christian experience is to live Christ. To die is to be with Christ. That is our prospect, our hope. Now I'm in chapter two. The example of Christ is given to us with respect to how we should live.

What is Christian experience now? To have the mind of Christ operating in us.

You remember in 1 Peter chapter 2:21-23, our Lord left us an example that we should follow in His steps. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, but left all things to him who judges righteously" (my version). In other words the mind of Christ primarily is the mind of meekness and humility. In Matthew chapter 11:28-29 Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

He left us an example of "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again" (1 Peter 2:23). Meekness. This is the life of Christ. Now, every Christian has the mind of Christ. Paul could say that in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 16. But every believer does not permit the mind of Christ to

control him. When the mind of Christ is operative in your life and my life, this is a really genuine Christian experience.

A lot of people have religious experiences and emotional experiences. I'm not talking about that. Neither is Paul. Paul's talking about the life of Christ being revealed through His people. And the mind of Christ is one of humility and meekness.

I've met Christians who boast about their Christian experiences. This is not the mind of Christ. Some men boast about the gifts that they have. This is not the mind of Christ. That's egotism. That's pride. Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.

You see, it's not the following of a set of rules. Christian experience is Christ controlling the believer. Just like Jesus could say in John 8:29, "For I do always those things that please Him" (the Father). In John 6:38, "I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." In Matthew 26:39, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." This is Christian experience.

It produces humility in life. And when our Saviour was reviled, He reviled not again. When He was threatened, He didn't threaten back. His was not an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth practice. He left everything in the hands of His Father.

If you confess to me that everything that God does is right and that He never leaves me nor forsakes me (Hebrews 13:5) and that I am the object of His love and care, this is true. Then anything and everything that comes into our life is for a purpose. Jesus knew this and hence He reviled not again. When they threatened Him, He didn't threaten back. He left everything to His Father, to the One who judges righteously.

You know, we get ourselves into trouble because we sit in judgment of others. We're afraid to manifest humility of heart and mind.

As one fellow would say, "Well, if I do what you say, they'll wipe their feet on me. I'm not going to be a door-mat to anybody."

I know that doesn't sound very nice, does it. But it wouldn't hurt you to be a door-mat for the glory of God. It wouldn't hurt you to have somebody wipe his feet all over you if it's for the glory of God. The trouble is you're too eager to stand in so-called righteous indignation and crack at the fellow who needs love and grace and compassion and tenderness and

insight. And hence, instead of attracting people to Christ, we drive them away from Christ. This does not honor God. This is not the mind of Christ.

I want to tell you, my Christian friends, today we're far removed from New Testament Christianity in our lives. Oh, how I long to meet people who are absolutely, really genuinely in love with Christ. They're willing if necessary to be a door-mat, if by so doing Christ be magnified. And I'm not talking about the world; I'm talking about God's people. It's so easy for us to stand upon our so-called rights. My Christian friend, when you and I accepted the Saviour, we waived all our rights.

We said, "Lord, You just come in and run our lives." And sometimes we don't like the way He wants to run our lives, so we rebel. And then our fellowship with God is broken and our usefulness is limited. Instead of making ourselves available to God for the manifestation of Christ in our lives, we hinder God's purpose in us. These things ought not to be. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

And starting in verse 6 through 11 you have where Christ is given as our pattern. Let's look at the first thing. In this passage we have from what He was to what He became. And you'll notice the steps down in His humiliation. Allow me to read the passage in Philippians 2.

2:5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus

2:6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

(Or as one version says, He did not think it a thing to be grasped after)

2:7. But made himself of no reputation (he emptied himself), and took upon him the form of a servant (bond slave), and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Here are steps in our Saviour's humiliation. And remember, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." If you take these verses, from verse 6 down through verse 8, you see three great things. You see the nature of His humiliation, and then you will see the manner of His humiliation, and then you will see the extent of His humiliation.

You know, when I think of this passage, I think also of Isaiah 14 and Isaiah 28 and Ezekiel 28 where Satan desired to be like God, was ambitious

to be like God, in his pride he wanted to be like God and be worshiped as God. This has always been Satan's desire. In fact, when you come to Revelation 13, God grants him that desire when the whole world wanders after the beast.

And if you read that Ezekiel passage through, you'll find that there are five steps in Satan's downfall. He aspired to be like God. He wanted to exalt his throne above the stars of God. He wanted to be like the Most High and so on. This is self-occupation, self-exaltation—self was the very heart of it—self, pride of self, egotism. And men have followed his path ever since.

Our Saviour was just the opposite. He was in the form of God. And here you have in these verses the nature of His humiliation. He gave up His position in glory. And then you've got the manner of His humiliation. We have what He became. And then we have the extent of His humiliation, how far He went in that humiliation. "And let this mind be in you."

I want you to mark this. This is the evidence of our Saviour in His meekness and His humility. He was one in mind and one in love with His Father. His whole life was dominated by a great desire, primarily, to please His Father. And because He fulfilled the task, He opened the door for men and women like you and me to become Christians, to become the children of one who is God.

Now, I'm going to take up these three things. May I repeat them? Will you read your Bibles again and notice them? The nature of His humiliation, that's what He gave up. And then the manner of His humiliation what He became. And then the extent of His humiliation, how far he went down in obedience to His Father's will for the purpose of the redemption of men and women. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

I wish that you might read this second chapter often because not only do we see the mind of Christ in His humiliation but we see Him in exaltation.

And we see the same mind of Christ operating in Paul, in Timothy, and Epaphroditus in the chapter.

So read it through over and over again.

And the Lord bless you today for His name's sake.

Day 16

Philippians 2:5-8 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We again come to you with studies in the book of Philippians. I sincerely hope that those of you who are following along in this study are reading your Bibles and especially the book of Philippians. In fact, I would suggest that you read the four chapters through at one sitting. Just sit down and read it. And then read it every day. And the more you read it, the more you get out of it. I find this, that the more I read a book, the more marvelous the book becomes to my own heart and mind.

And then read this second chapter of Philippians that we're taking up now, regarding the mind of Christ. And to me, it's an astounding thing in this revelation concerning our Saviour that He left the glory and took His place in humanity. Allow me again to read from verse 5 down through verse 8. Just those few verses.

2:5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

You remember in a few verses beforehand, apparently, there were those in the church at Philippi who were not of the same mind. They were full of self-esteem, self-seeking, and seeking the pre-eminence. Now, Paul says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

2:6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

2:7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

You'll notice here we have our Saviour in humiliation. He is the pattern for us. We go from what He was to what He became. And first of all, we have the nature of that humiliation. He gave up His position in glory. "He who was in the form of God did not think it a thing to be held onto" (if I may use that term).

You remember in Hebrews chapter 1, verses 2 and 3, God is speaking to us through His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world, who is the brightness of His glory and the express

image of His person, and so on. Here you have Jesus, the Son of God, in deity.

In Colossians 1:19, “It was pleasing to the Godhead that in Jesus Christ all fullness should dwell.” In 2 Corinthians 4:4 we read that the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.

In 1 John chapter 1 in the first two or three verses, we have —“That which was from the beginning, which we had heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” Here you have Jesus Christ who was God.

Remember in John 1:18: “No man hath seen God at any time: The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

I’ve oftentimes said, and I repeat it, just what I know of Jesus is what I know of God. Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. In Isaiah chapter 40, verse 9, the prophet said, “Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” In Matthew chapter 1, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (verse 23). That’s what it means. The Lord of Glory took His place in humanity. To do this He had to empty Himself or He took upon Himself no reputation. This One, who resigned His Father’s will, voluntarily submitted Himself to that will—so much so that He could say in John 5, “The words that I speak are not mine, they are My Father’s. What I see the Father do, that’s what I do” (verse 19).

What a different thing it is with Satan. In Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, Satan desired to be like God. He aspired to be worshiped like God.

In Genesis chapter 3, what was the subtlety of the temptation to Adam and Eve? To Eve, Satan said, “God knows in the day you eat thereof, you shall be like God.”

Even man today wants to be worshiped as God. Over in China this man Mao wanted to be worshiped as God. In Germany, in the Nazi program with Hitler, he was worshiped as God. People were buried in the name of Adolph Hitler. Down through the centuries men have wanted to be

worshiped as God. You take in the book of Acts, chapter 12, where Herod was smitten by God because he accepted the worship of people when they said, "It's the face of a god" (verse 21- 23). Men have always aspired to be God.

Even in our present generation, we may not bow down before idols of wood and stone but we worship men. And men love to be worshiped. My, what a difference with our Saviour. Our Lord was God. Do you remember in John chapter 17 He could say, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (verse 5).

When Jesus left the glory and took His place in humanity, what did He have to leave to one side to take his place in humanity? I'm of the persuasion He had to lay to one side, His glory. You remember when Job saw the Lord in Job the last chapter, he could say, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself" (verses 5 and 6).

When Moses said to God in Exodus 33:18, "Show me thy glory," God said to Moses, "No man can see me (that is, in my glory) and live" (verse 20).

When Isaiah saw the Lord in Isaiah chapter 6, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple and the seraphim cried out, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory'" (verses 1-3). And when Isaiah saw it, he fell at His feet and cried out, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King"(verse 5).

And in John chapter 12 I read, "Isaiah spake of Jesus when he saw Him in His glory" (verse 41).

For the Holy Son of God to take His place in humanity, He could not come in His glory. Men could not stand the glory of God. In John chapter 8, man could not even stand the presence of Jesus in veiled glory. How much then can man stand in the presence of God in His unveiled glory?

You know, I've had people tell me, "Sir, I'll take a chance on this question of salvation. God is love and He would never cut anybody away from His presence."

That's true. God doesn't need to cast anyone out from His presence. The unsaved man will not be able to stand in the presence of God and will

be glad to get out of His presence. How can one whose heart is darkened because of sin stand in the presence of One Who is absolutely light, where there are no shadows, no darkness? As the light shines upon that darkened heart and its sin, that person will be glad to leave the presence of God.

And I say this reverently. It's a terrible thing. As the book of Hebrews says, "It's a terrible thing to stand in the presence of God." It's a fearful thing to come into the presence of God.

And today I find men repudiating Christ, repudiating the Word of God, repudiating the person of God even to go so far as to say that God is dead and that God has no interest in the human race. And so they have exalted themselves and taken the place of God. And here and there, right along through history, men have demanded worship and have come under the judgment of God. It will be so today. I say this very, very kindly, yet I must say it.

Friend, you and I are living in a generation when men and women have spurned the living God. They've taken on themselves the spirit of Satan. They're proud. They defy God. They ridicule the Saviour of sinners. And I want to say very, very kindly that the cup of iniquity is filling to the brim. And when the cup is full, the sentence of God will fall upon them.

And if you read the book of Genesis, chapter 15, the reason why the wrath of God came upon the Amorites is because their cup was filled full. Why did God send the flood? Because the thoughts and the imaginations of the heart of man were evil continually (Genesis 6:5).

And now, we're coming to the end of this generation, this age. And I find that this age is ending with the worship of man and the repudiation of the Gospel, the ridiculing of the Saviour, the spurning of the Word of God. The cup is filling full very, very fast. And my friend, let me say very honestly that as I see the cup of iniquity filling full, there's nothing left but the wrath and judgment of God.

God has left you and me, Christian friend, to bring to them the good news concerning His Son, that Jesus Christ did leave heaven, laid aside His glory to take His place in humanity for the purpose of redemption. This is the manner, the nature of his humiliation. He emptied Himself of His glory for the purpose of reaching you and me, for the purpose of revealing to you and me the wonderful God whom we have.

Again let me quote that verse from John 1:18, “No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed Him.”

Do I want to know God? I must look at Jesus. “Say unto the cities of America, Behold your God!” I’m quoting Isaiah 40:9 and putting the word “America” in there. You can put the name of your country there if you are reading this in another land. God has revealed Himself to our generation through His Son. What are we going to do then with God’s Son whom He sent to be a redeemer?

Shall we accept Him as our Saviour?

Or shall we reject Him? And thus He becomes our judge.

Oh, I would plead with you Christians today to so walk before God that men and women of our generation and our precious young people will be brought to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Why did He come?

Because He loved men.

Why did He lay aside His glory?

Because He loved men and women.

He came to put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself as we shall see more in our next lesson when we take up the manner of His humiliation. He came for the purpose of redeeming you and me.

Will you please read this chapter through over and over and over again, and think about the Lord Jesus, leaving His place in glory just because He loved you and because He loved me.

Day 17

Philippians 2:5-8 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We again come to you with daily studies in the Word of God. Our great purpose is that the people of God may be established and edified and built up in their faith. We also desire that the Word of God may become more and more precious to you, and we trust too that those who are not saved might hear the Word of Life and come to know the Saviour.

You remember that the psalmist says in the 119th Psalm, “The entrance of Thy Word giveth light.” And to those who are in darkness the Spirit of God has come to open their eyes to the glories of Christ. He does this so that they might enter into the kingdom of life, “He hath translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:13).

And we come now to this wonderful passage again in the book of Philippians, chapter 2. I’ve been reading concerning our Saviour in His humiliation. You’ll remember that the key of chapter 2 is in verse 5:

2:5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

2:6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

2:7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a (bond) servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Now in our last lesson we were dealing with the fact of the nature of His humiliation, for in these verses 6-8, we have not only what our Saviour was and what He became but also the nature of that humiliation. He gave up His position in glory and came down and took His place in humanity. It was the voluntary submission of our Saviour to the will of His Father; for you remember the great Word concerning Him was, “I delight to do Thy will, oh, My God, for Thy Word is in My heart.” And He did this for the purpose of redemption.

Now the second thing spoken of here in His humiliation is the manner of His humiliation; that is, what He became. He became a real man; He became a bond-slave. Mark those verses, will you, please. In verse 7,

2:7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself.

Here is what He became—He became a real man.

You remember in Romans, chapter 8, the 3rd verse, we read, “What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God in sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” And you remember in Hebrews, chapter 10, verses 5-10, “In the volume of the book, it is written of Me, ‘I delight to do Thy Will.’” Or the preceding verse, which speaks of the fact, “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me.”

Or let me go back to John, chapter 1. You remember how it starts: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” In verse 14, “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.” In the 18th verse, “No man has seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, (He hath shown Him forth;) He hath declared (revealed) Him.”

In other words, when Jesus Christ came, it was God coming into the human family for the purpose of revealing Himself as a real man in the midst of men. You know it's a wonderful thing to know this—that Jesus Christ was not just a man; He was God manifest in the flesh.

I remember the story of a Brahmin in India. This man had gone to the University of Calcutta to learn English. He had been taught to read the English New Testament; and it was so wonderful that he thought this was beyond all human comprehension. But he could not accept the Saviour because of the question of incarnation.

You see, being a Hindu, a Brahmin, he believed that everything that had life had come from some preceding generation or from some preceding life. That's why they won't kill their cows over there; they won't kill snakes; they won't touch anything in case they might be touching some of their forebears. And so he couldn't accept this question of incarnation.

But, one day he was walking over the fields of India, and he came to an ant hill. He noticed that when his shadow crossed the ant hill, all the ants scurried down the hole. And then, when he moved his shadow away from the ant hill, all the ants came out again. He stood there meditating,

“How in the world can I let these ants know that I wouldn’t hurt them, that I wouldn’t harm them. I wouldn’t for anything touch them.” Then he realized the only way he could do that was for him to become an ant, retaining his personality. He would then be able to come into the presence of these ants and inform them that he wouldn’t hurt them.

And then it suddenly dawned upon him—that’s what the incarnation is. God could not come into the human family in all His glory. Men couldn’t stand His glory!

As God said to Moses when he asked to see His glory, “No man can see me and live.” Man cannot stand in the presence of God in His blazing glory!

I’ve said this once or twice already, but I cannot get over the fact that He became veiled in flesh; He became a man in the midst of men. When our Saviour came here, He laid aside His glory, for you remember again that verse in John 16 when He said, “Father, glorify Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” He became a man in the midst of men.

And you notice something else—He not only became a man in the midst of men for the purpose of redemption, but He became a bondsman.

You know, I’ve oftentimes wondered about that. Here is the eternal Son of God, Who framed the ages and yet took the place of the poor when He went into the fields to eat corn on the Sabbath day.

And this One Who made all things and stilled the storms could say to a poor Samaritan woman, “Give me a drink.” It’s beyond all comprehension. Then when I come to John, chapter 13, our Lord laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. He took a basin of water and began to wash the disciples’ feet. What was He doing? He—was taking the place of a slave. He was taking the place of a slave. This is what Philippians 2 says, “He took upon Him the form of a servant.” And that word servant there, *doulos*, means a slave, a bondservant.

Do you ever stop to think how far Jesus went just to redeem you? Why did God come into the human race? For the purpose of redeeming the human race. And if one had time to go into the book of Ruth, the fourth

chapter—the last chapter of the book of Ruth in the Old Testament—where only one who belongs to the family can redeem a member of the family. And there you see the picture of Him as our kinsman-redeemer.

He became a member of the human family for the purpose of redeeming those in the human family. And, my friends, this is why He came—not that you love God. Oh, no; but He loved you and sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live. And the next verse says He sent His Son into the world to be the redeeming sacrifice for our sins, the propitiation for our sins—satisfying God and satisfying those who put their trust in Him.

I would plead with your heart to think of this: How much the Lord Jesus must have loved you and me to leave His place in glory, worshiped by angelic beings. He came into this scene and became a slave, became a man, and went to the cross and died to redeem you and me. My, how we who trust Him, we who claim to love Him, should indeed manifest our love for Him by a life of continual obedience to His Word.

I say it's a wonderful thing to have such a Saviour Who loved us so much that He took His place in the human family. This was the manner of His humiliation.

And now in the next lesson we take up the extent of that humiliation. And may the Lord bless you for His Name's sake.

Day 18

Philippians 2:7-8

Good-day, friends. We again have the opportunity of sitting down and talking about the wonders of our Saviour,

And in the second chapter of Philippians, which we are studying, we're dealing with our Saviour in His humiliation. This was the mind of Christ, a mind of meekness and humility, leaving His place in glory; and, taking His place in humanity, He became a real man. And, my friend, don't you forget it—Jesus Christ was a real man! A real man!

If you don't believe that, you read the Gospel through Luke and the Gospel through John. In Luke's Gospel, He is the friend of publicans and sinners. He's the One who loves the sinner, Who forgives the sinner. He attracts the sinner. He justifies the sinner. He seeks the sinner. This is Luke's Gospel. The wonder of it all—how He could take women like Mary of Magdala and cast demons out of her and make her a transformed woman! He was a real man in the midst of men. He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knew what it was to hunger; He knew what it was to be debased; He knew what it was to be opposed. Yet He stands forth as God's man in the midst of men without sin.

And when we come to the Gospel of John, as you well know, He manifests His deity in those seven great signs. But, my friend, He was a real man. He stood up against the Pharisees, the religionists of the day, and the liberals of the day in the Sadducees, and even the politicians in the Herodians! He stood and took His place with no fear. He was a real man in the midst of men, and He came into the human family for the purpose of redeeming you and me.

Now we've been dealing with the humiliation of our Saviour. We found the nature of that humiliation: He gave up His position in glory and took His place in humanity. We found the manner of His humiliation, what He became: He became a bond-slave. And now, we have the third thing in the extent of His humiliation. How far did He go in His humiliation? Let me read it again in verses 7 and 8 of chapter two of Philippians:

2:7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Now why did Paul put that in? I remember where the Apostle Paul could say in Galatians 6:14: “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world.” He wrote the Galatian church, “If I yet preach circumcision, then is the offence of the cross ceased.” There was no stigma if he preached the Law.

Do you and I ever realize—I’m sure we don’t, we don’t—if we had been living in the first century under the Roman government, we would have known more than we do now—to be crucified was a terrible thing! He humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross. He died as an outcast of society. He died as one who was accursed of God, for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangeth on a tree.”

Celius, the Roman historian, said, “To scourge a Roman is a heinous thing, but what shall I say of one hanging upon a cross? Let not even his name be mentioned.”

And as far as we know, we have no record of a Roman being crucified. Jesus was crucified. Tradition says that Peter was crucified. Paul, a Roman, was not crucified; he was beheaded on the Appian Highway. You see, crucifixion was reserved for the vilest of the vile. It was reserved for slaves, for arch-criminals. You remember the ones who were crucified with our Saviour were criminals. Barabbas, who was set free, this one whose place Jesus took, was a murderer, was a criminal, was an outcast of society.

And when Jesus died on the middle cross between these two malefactors, these two thieves, these two criminals, He was being crucified as the leading one of the three. As the worst one of the three!

You know we Christians don’t realize this—how bad, how sinful we are when Paul says in Galatians 2:20 concerning our Saviour “who loved me” and died “and “gave Himself for me.”

Did He die for you?

You say, “Yes.”

And how bad were you?

My friend, you were so bad that Jesus had to die on the cross. He had to die as an accursed thing. He went to unlimited depths, as Hebrews, chapter 2 says, “He tasted death for everyone.” What a distance He traveled to save you and me—from the glory to the curse, from heaven to the cross!

Can you measure this?!

If you can measure the infinite love of God, then you can measure the distance that Christ came for you and for me. It is impossible for us to measure the distance from the throne of God to a cross of shame! He not only died, says the Apostle, but He died *even* the death of the cross. He was obedient unto death because He paid the penalty not for an elect few but for the sins of the whole world—everyone who has lived, is living and will live upon this earth (John 1:9).

That's why I repeat that 40th Psalm: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body Thou hast prepared Me." "In the volume of the book it is written of Me, 'I delight to do Thy will, oh, my God, for Thy Word is in my heart.'" And as the last verse of John 14 says, "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment; even so I do" (verse 31).

No human mind can begin to measure the distance Christ traveled to redeem you and redeem me. He not only died—He wasn't stoned—He was crucified! "Cursed is everyone who hangeth on a tree."

I wish in some way I could put into words how I feel about this—that Jesus Christ was cast out by men, an outcast from society. They said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." They spit upon Him. They reviled Him. They cursed Him. They taunted Him; and as the 69th Psalm says, "Reproach hath broken my heart; I am full of heaviness." He "looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him." He was absolutely an outcast and forsaken by God, for you remember in both Matthew and Mark, He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?!"

Oh, the depth to which Jesus went just to save you and me.

My Christian friend, may I ask you very bluntly, what does Jesus Christ mean to you? Honestly now, what does He really mean to you? I'm not asking you if you are religious or if you go to church or if you have joined certain churches. I am not concerned about that. I am concerned about one thing:

What does Jesus Christ, God's Son, mean to you?

You meant so much to Him that He willingly became an accursed thing. To become our sin-bearer, He died as a malefactor, as a criminal. The cross is an insult to my intelligence, to my philosophy, to my morality, to my religion. The cross says absolutely that you and I are so bad that it took

Sovereign God Himself in the person of the sinless One to suffer the brunt of the Father's wrath against sin. Jesus Christ went to the extreme to pay the penalty for our sin.

Oh, that our love for Him might consume us—those of us who have put our trust in Him, those of us who call ourselves Christians.

I wonder sometimes how much real love we have for the Saviour.

Is it a sacrificial love?

Is it a love that burns?

Is it a love that is always fresh and fervent?

I leave that with you just now—the manner of His humiliation and now the extent of His humiliation. He could go no farther. He went right down into the very bowels of death and became an accursed thing. He became sin for us—for us, for you and for me—that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

My friend, my friend, my Christian friend, why don't you get into your Bible. Look at your Saviour. Don't read and study your Bible to prove some doctrine. Read your Bible to see Him, to fall in love with Him, to have your life wrapped around Him.

As Isaiah 40 in the last verse says, "They that entwine their hearts about the Lord shall renew their strength"—we exchange our weakness for His strength. "We shall mount up with wings as eagles; we shall run and not be weary; we shall walk and not faint." But the key of it is to entwine your heart about him.

Putting it in simple language—why don't you fall in love with the Saviour?

How much do you love Him today?

Why don't you tell Him that?

Why don't you for a moment just go down and tell the Lord how much you love Him?

It may be it's a long time since you did that, but He'd love to hear you tell Him.

Why don't you tell Him today?

Won't you?

And the Lord bless you.

Day 19

Philippians 2:6-11

Good-day, friends. I hope that you get as much joy out of these studies as I have in giving them to you. I confess that it is very difficult for me to just go by some of these verses—they're so pregnant with truth, so wonderful, especially these verses that we have been studying the last two or three sessions in the book of Philippians, chapter 2—the marvel of our Saviour!

I can't in my own mind and heart begin to express the marvel of this thing that eternal God, the Son of God, should leave the glory and come down here, take His place in humanity, become a bond-slave, and then, become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And we were discussing in our last lesson this amazing fact that He went to the extreme for you and me—cast out by society, crucified and then abandoned by our holy God who cannot even look upon sin. He was accursed of God! Cursed by man, forsaken by our holy God just because He loved you and me.

Now if that were the end of the picture, it would be a tragedy. I repeat that. If this were all there is to the Gospel, then it would be a tragedy. If when Christ died and was buried, that's the end of the picture, it's the greatest tragedy in the history of man—that the One Who was sinless, the one Who was righteous, the One Who always did the will of God, the One Who healed the sick and cleansed the lepers and cast out demons and stilled the storm and raised the dead and fed the hungry would end up on a cross of shame, dying as a slave, dying as a criminal—if that were the end of the story, my friend, there would be no Christianity. There would be no salvation. It would be a great tragedy—the greatest tragedy in human history.

But that's not the end of the story, thank God. Have you got your Bibles? We're reading in Philippians, chapter 2. And I'm going to reread again from verse 6, speaking of our Saviour,

2:6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery (thought it not a thing to be held unto) to be equal with God:

2:7. But made himself of no reputation (or as some versions say, He emptied Himself), and took upon him the form of a servant (bond-slave), and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

2:9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given Him a name which is above every name:

2:10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

2:11. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now, as I have read these verses, I couldn't help but think of the fact that He goes right from the cross to glory, from being cast out by men to being accepted in heaven, from a cross to a throne, from humiliation to exaltation—and that exaltation is far beyond all principalities and powers, everything and every name that is named. And every knee is going to bow—in heaven and earth and in hell—every created intelligence in God's vast universe is going to bow the knee and proclaim Jesus—notice the title used—Jesus, to be “Lord” to the glory of God the Father.

Now my friend, this is not universal reconciliation. This is universal recognition. You see, this One Who died and was made an accursed thing was raised from the dead. Of course, this is the great theme of the Book of Acts. This is the great theme of the New Testament. The foundational structure of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If Christ be not raised from the dead, we haven't anything, as 1 Corinthians 15 says. But God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory that your faith and hope might be in God. Remember where Peter says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

Every created intelligence in God's universe is going to bow the knee—every one of them—the ones who even hate the Saviour are going to be forced to bow the knee and acknowledge that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

My friend, it's a wonderful thing that we can bow the knee today and acknowledge Him as Saviour and as Lord. And if you want to talk about

universal reconciliation, my friend, you don't find it in the Bible. Now it's true, in Colossians, chapter 1, reading from verse 21 on through, Paul talks about reconciliation of the heavens and the earth; and "you, who were sometimes afar off hath He reconciled through the body of His death." Reconciliation does not reach down to the devil, the fallen angels, and to lost men and women. I speak of the future, the eternal future. But there will be universal recognition that this Jesus, whom they spurned, is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

You know it's a wonderful thing today that, though He manifested His great love and became a Man in the midst of men and was crucified and was cast out by men and forsaken by God, He completed the task of redemption.

He met all the demands of the righteous character of God and all the holy character of God, the justice of God. He has made it now possible for God to pick up men and women, just like you and me, and transform us into the children of God, to forgive every trespass, every sin, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, giving us eternal life; and He's able to bring us into His own family and call us His children and adopt us as sons.

My, what a Saviour we have!

What a salvation this is! Guaranteed by the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus!

Do you know this is what Paul means in Ephesians 1:19, 20, and 21, when he says, "That you might know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, far above principalities and power" and authorities, and so on.

Now you have it in this verse: "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

I want to emphasize one little word, first of all. Notice the word, the name used here, the name Jesus. Why didn't He say, Christ? No. The import of the resurrection is who was raised. It was not a spirit. The Bible doesn't teach about a spiritual resurrection. It's physical. The man who was nailed to the cross was the one who came forth in resurrection—Jesus.

That's why Peter in Acts, chapter 2, could say: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which

God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: . . . Whom God hath raised up” from the dead.” Who? Jesus of Nazareth. You have it here. “God has given Him a name that is above every name, that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.”

My friend, may I put it this way? Of Jesus, this One Who was born of Mary in Bethlehem, the very first promise of the New Testament was given—Matthew 1:18 “Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.”

Where is that Jesus today?

He’s at the right hand of God having all authority. He’s glorified with the glory of the eternal God.

Jesus could say, “Glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”

He is saying, “Father, I want something—that all who put their trust in Me shall see Me in My glory. Now is My Father glorified, and if My Father be glorified, He’ll glorify His Son.” And our Saviour could say to the Father, “Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may also glorify Thee” (John 17:1).

Why has He saved men and women for the glory of God? The ultimate purpose of all salvation is for the glory of God and is guaranteed to us in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus.

If you go to the book of Hebrews, chapter 1, verse 3; chapter 8, verse 1; chapter 10, verse 12; chapter 12, verse 2; four times in Hebrews I read that He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. In other words, He was given all authority. That’s why Jesus could say in Revelation, chapter 1, verse 18: “I have the keys of death and of hell,” authority over death and hell. This One Who became an accursed thing, God has exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour.

I tell you, it’s a wonderful thing. It’s a wonderful thing to be able to call Him “Lord” now. Is He your Lord? Have you exalted Him in your life to be Lord and Master?

Don’t you think that if God the Father gladly, joyfully, acclaims Jesus as Lord, as you have in Hebrews, chapter 1, “and Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundations of the earth,” that you and I should acknowledge Jesus as Lord?

My Christian brother and sister, won’t you just today, sometime today, bow your heart and possibly your knees in the presence of Him, who

is your Saviour, and acknowledge Him to be your Lord? That means One who is absolutely in control. Yield yourself to Him and let Him work out His purpose and His plan in your life. It may mean the transforming of your life. Who knows?

Do it today, and the Lord bless you.

Day 20

Philippians 2:12-16

Good-day, friends. We again have the joy of sitting down and having a little chat with you. The great desire of our hearts is that people should know the Word of God.

And today we again come to you in the book of Philippians, chapter 2. And as we again read from this second chapter, we're dealing with the mind of Christ. We've just been dealing with our Lord in His humiliation and His exaltation. Now following this, there comes this question of our responsibility in view of what the Lord has done for us. Now he's talking to Christians –he's not talking to the unsaved—in verse 12. Allow me to read verses 12 to 16:

2:12. Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in My presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

2:13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

2:14. Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

2:15. That you may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world;

2:16. Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

We want to spend a little time on these verses. But first of all let me clear one thing up in your minds. He is not talking here to sinners. The Apostle Paul is in prison and writing to his beloved Philippian Christians. These are men and women who have accepted the Saviour in the midst of much satanic opposition as well as opposition from men. They have experienced suffering for Christ's sake, and now he is appealing to them to do something with respect to the glorification of this One Who became a Man in the midst of men, who became a slave and who went to death, even the death of the cross, and who became an accursed thing that you and I might be saved.

So he writes in verse 12,

2:12. Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

2:13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Paul is calling here for the believer to cooperate with God who wants to display through you and through me, by our words, by our actions, by our very motives, that which will manifest His character, His love and His grace, and that which is according to His will, as you have it in verse 13—both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

It must be God Who does the work. In fact, I'm going to say, it's entirely of God; but it is the will of God operating in a believer's life. The living, eternal God is working in and through His people. And that which He works in us can only be worked out through us if you and I cooperate with God. That means a yielded life. That means His will instead of my will.

Now I recognize that some people take the end of verse 12, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" and declare you must work out your salvation, that you've got to be saved by your works. But Paul is talking to Christians; he's talking to saved people; he's talking to believers; he's talking to those who are his, the beloved; to those who have always obeyed. These are not the unsaved. It's not a question of if you do your part and God does His part, then you shall be saved.

No. He's dealing entirely with those who have come to the Saviour; he's talking about those in whom the Lord Jesus dwells, in whom God dwells. These were people whose bodies had become the sanctuaries of God. Now he tells them to work out their own salvation.

Notice the words. He did not say, "work for your salvation" but to work it out. Now it's not that the work of salvation is unfinished. In John 17:4, Jesus says, "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." In John 19:30, He said, "It is finished." Forgiveness, eternal life, justification, becoming children of God—these are all dependent upon the finished work of Christ.

But now he's talking about something else. Remember, I am not saved by the work of Christ *in* me; I am saved by the work of Christ *for* me, at the cross. Now let's get these prepositions correct—and I don't mind repeating

this because there are so many people who have been robbed of peace and joy and assurance because of this very verse.

We are not saved by the work of Christ *in* us; but we are saved by the work of Christ *for* us. He is one hundred percent Saviour! When He died on the cross, He did a perfect work. He fully satisfied God. And what Paul asks sinners to do is to put their trust in Jesus Christ. When a man or woman puts his trust in the Saviour, then his body becomes the sanctuary of God. His sins are forgiven. Eternal life is his gift from God. He becomes a child of God. This is all on the ground of what Christ did for us.

Now, Christian experience is what Christ is doing *in* us and *through* us. It is this of which Paul is writing.

For example, take the next verse: “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” God wants to work; He’s already working in you His good pleasure. But He wants it to be worked out, and this calls for human cooperation—not to be saved, but to manifest something of the character and love and grace of the One Who has saved us. He wants your body. He wants your mind. He wants your personality to be in His hands to be used for His glory.

You see, it’s a personal salvation. Work out your salvation between God and you. This salvation is already mine, but it has to be worked out in our daily living. He’s talking about the second part of salvation.

If I may stop just for a moment and say this—when it comes to salvation, we *have been saved*, we are *being saved*, we are *yet to be saved*. You and I, if we have trusted the Saviour, have been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin. We enjoy forgiveness. We can say, as far as East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Now we are being saved day by day from the power of sin. This is taken up very fully in the book of Romans 6, in 2 Corinthians 5 and other passages. We’re being delivered from the power of sin. This depends upon a yieldedness on our part.

Paul says, “Yield yourselves as those who are alive from the dead and your members, your bodies, as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Before we were saved, we yielded our bodies to sin. Now he says, yield them unto God.

We are yet to be saved from the very presence of sin. This is when the Lord Jesus is going to come for His own and when we’re going to leave this

world with all its sin and shame and rebellion. We're going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and to be delivered from the very presence of sin. There'll be no more shadows, no more sorrows, no more failures then, and no more broken fellowship. This is yet future.

If I were to break it down into books, in Romans you have what Christ has done for me at the cross; in Hebrews, what Christ is doing for me now as my intercessor and advocate; and then in Thessalonians and Revelation, we find what He's going to do in the future. He's going to come and take the church unto Himself; and then He's going to return to the earth as King, as Judge, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God. You see the three aspects of salvation.

Now Paul here in Philippians 2 is dealing with the second one. And again I'm going to repeat, because I want this to be very, very clear in your mind. Your salvation and my salvation was settled once for all at the cross when Christ died for us. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And the very exaltation of Christ, which we have just been having in the preceding verses, His very exaltation to God's right hand is a guarantee to you that that work on the cross was completed and finished and can't be added to. Jesus Christ did not do 99% and leave 1% for you. He did the whole business. That's why Paul, in Philippians 1:6 says, "He which hath begun a good work in you shall perfect it until the day of Christ."

Or in 2 Timothy 1:12, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard the deposit until that day." What I am trying to say to you, my friend, is you've got to have your salvation before it can be worked out. Christ has worked for your salvation. Now it is yours when you put your trust in Him. He wants you to cooperate with God so that the salvation which is already in you by God will be worked out through you in your life.

The Spirit of God indwells us for the purpose of revealing God to His people. And how can I manifest God to people? By letting Him work out His life through me. This is what Paul is talking about: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Now let me say again, he didn't say work *for* your own salvation, but "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God Who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." In other words, it's not a passive thing. It is an active thing—a life manifested by the living

God through His people. Our business is to work out what is already worked in.

It's a present salvation from the power of sin. It is to manifest our union with Christ by showing forth His life. It implies that His power is for us and it involves a real duty to us. It's to be done with fear and trembling. The salvation is secured, yet we fear.

What do we mean? Well, we don't want to displease Him. We fear, lest we displease Him, you see. We fear, lest we live a life that is not pleasing to the Lord Who redeemed us—this is what he is talking about. This is his plea, so that you and I today will live that life which will glorify the Saviour and so that, when your neighbor and your friends and your family meet you, they'll see something of the living God working out His life in you. This is what He wants. And you look to the Lord today for that, and the Lord bless you.

Day 21

Philippians 2:12-16 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We again have the joy and privilege of sitting down and discussing with you the Word of God, and, needless to say, it is my joy and delight to discuss the wonderful things of our Saviour with those who have ears to hear and whose hearts are open to the truth.

I am more and more convinced that truth is never imparted by argument. It is only as our hearts are open to what God has for us that we learn, that we experience the very life of God. And remember that a spiritual life is the enjoyment of divine life.

When you and I accepted Jesus Christ as our own personal Saviour, God came to live in us. And Paul says to the Corinthian church, “Don’t you know that your body is the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit which you have of God, and you are not your own; you are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits which are His.”

And with that thought in mind, I wish you might again come with me to the second chapter of the book of Philippians. We’re reading from verse 12. And you remember in verse 12 right on down through verse 16, there is given to us a responsibility.

If I may be permitted again to repeat one or two things—when I say that our Lord in humiliation and exaltation did a tremendous job for you and me, He completed the work of redemption. And now, because we are one with Him, because we’re saved, because we’re His beloved—as you have it in verse 12—He wants us to work out what He has already worked in.

Allow me to read the verses again.

2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Then he goes on to state two or three verses which I shall read in a few moments.

We’ve been discussing this question of a salvation which we already have, and again I want to emphasize the fact he never talks about our

working out—or working for our salvation. We do have a salvation in Christ, and God wants that salvation to be manifested in our lives. And this is the privilege—to work out that which is already worked in.

And again I emphasize it must be in you before it can be worked out through you. It's a personal salvation. Only let it be manifested.

And then in verses 14 and 15, the outflow of that would be our walk and our conduct, as Paul could say in Ephesians 5, "We are to walk circumspectly." So allow me to read verses 14 and 15 now.

2:14. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.

2:15. That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (generation), among whom you shine as lights in the world.

This is how we are to walk, "without murmurings." Now murmurings are always manward; disputings are manward. In other words, when you and I murmur as Christians, it's against God.

You remember in the book of Numbers, God said to Moses that the people of Israel had murmured ten times. When we murmur, we're not satisfied with what God has done for us. When we murmur, we're not satisfied with the circumstances or we're not satisfied with what *we* think should be done. Murmurings, my friend, are always against God. And the tragedy is too many of us murmur. He may take one of your loved ones. Don't you be angry at God!

In fact, I've even heard Christians who blame God for all sorts of things. They sit in judgment on God. Think of it! Think of it! Think of the arrogance of the human heart that would dare to sit in judgment on God! Now they don't mean that; I know that. But they accuse God; they blame God; and they murmur at God.

Remember that the moment you and I are saved, we become the special objects of the love and grace and mercy of God. All that God is is for you. And the thing that God really wants is your fellowship for the purpose of glorifying His name. When you and I walk in fellowship with God, then we don't murmur.

And, furthermore, not only do we not murmur, but we do not dispute with others. We're not going to cause trouble, you see.

I wish in some way I could put into words just the way I feel about this. Do all things without murmurings and disputings. What for? "That you

may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.” How are we to walk? Here’s our character—blameless to self, harmless to others, without rebuke before God.

Can I repeat that? That you may be blameless—this has to do with yourself. You’re to be harmless—that is concerning others. You are to be without rebuke—this is our stand before God. Why? Because of where we walk. We are in the midst of a rebellious people. We are a people separated unto God; we are in a world of which we have no part.

In John, chapter 16, our Lord could say concerning His disciples: “They are not of the world even as I am not of the world.” We are in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. There’s no question that you and I are living at a period of time in the history of the world when sin, rebellion, moral corruption, defiance of God is everywhere. We find not only a defiance but a cold indifference to God.

The amazing thing is not that people are indifferent to Christ and to God, but they’re satisfied to be indifferent. We’re living in the midst of a perverse and evil generation, a crooked generation. And as the sons of God—that’s what he says—as the sons of God, how shall we conduct our life?

I am to be blameless with respect to my life and to be harmless with respect to others and to so live that I will be without rebuke before God because I’m living in the midst of a sinful generation. And when I speak of the world, let me repeat, I’m not speaking of the earth upon which we live or the globe. I’m speaking of a system that is religious, that is moral, that is philosophical, that’s diametrically opposed to God.

You remember Jesus said in John, chapter 15, verse 18 and on: If the world loves you, remember, it didn’t love Me; and if the world doesn’t love Me, it’s not going to love you. If the world doesn’t accept My sayings, it will not receive your sayings.

In 1 John, chapter 2, John writes in verses 15, 16, and 17: “Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for all that is in the world—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. Now the world passeth away and the lust thereof. He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

See, it's the world as a system. It starts way back in the book of Genesis, chapter 4, when Cain went out and built a world without God. Here is a system; its god is Satan. You find this in 2 Corinthians 4, where we read, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of those who believe not."

In Ephesians, chapter 2: Before we were Christians, we were under the domination of the spirit of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, the spirit that energizes the unsaved, the world. You and I are to be blameless and harmless, without rebuke. We are the sons of God, and we're living in a world that has no place for Jesus Christ, that has no place for His grace or for His love.

How then are we to live? We're to shine as lights. Oh, here is a responsibility. We are to shine as lights in this world.

In other words, work out your own salvation.

How can I do it?

God works it in me. As I yield myself to God, I find that I'm not murmuring anymore. I'm not disputing anymore. I'm blameless and harmless, without rebuke. And you and I separate from the world in order to manifest something of the beauty and character and the love and grace of the Saviour for men and women. My friend, this is your responsibility and mine.

Your body and my body are the sanctuary of God, and God is pleased to take men and women whom He has redeemed and use them for the display of all that He is. Will He give us power? Yes! Also grace and love and mercy, tenderness and compassion. This is what men need to see. And I'm telling you again, this world is dying for a revelation of Christ in His people.

Now work out your own salvation. It is "God who worketh in you." And when that happens, we'll be blameless and harmless and without rebuke.

And may the Lord wonderfully bless you today as you seek to glorify Him for His name's sake.

Day 22

Philippians 2:12-16 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We are in the book of Philippians, chapter 2, dealing with a very, very wonderful and yet amazing passage. We've just been dealing with the question of the humiliation and exaltation of our Saviour; and now we're dealing with the believer's responsibility in verses 12 to 16.

We find first of all, our privilege in verses 12 and 13 where we are to walk or work out our own salvation with fear and trembling because it is God Who worketh in us. He works in us and then, as we yield to Him, that ministry is worked out through us. In other words, it calls for personal cooperation between God and us—just as in the early church when Peter said, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” Or in chapter 13 of Acts when the Spirit of God said to the early church, “Separate me Saul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them.” And they being sent forth by the church were also sent forth by the Holy Spirit (verses 2-4).

And so it is here with us—this divine cooperation between the believer and God. The work is entirely of God, but we become the channel through which He manifests His character, His love, His grace, His purpose, His will. As we read here in verse 13, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Oh, that His pleasure might be worked out in us!

And then in verses 14 and 15, we have our conduct or our walk. We are to walk carefully. We are to walk without murmurings, without disputings. We are to be blameless and harmless without rebuke.

And where are we to walk? Among a rebellious people. Remember, Christian friend, we are in the world, yet not of the world. We are a separated people unto God. This is what Paul means in Philippians 3:20 when he says, “Our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour.”

Now you say, what are you doing down here if your citizenship is in heaven?

Well, I'm down here on business, aren't you? Our lives are to show forth His praise and His glory. Our witness is to bring other men and women to Christ. And God grant that we may take our position as those who are

separated unto God in this world, as Paul could say in verse 15: "That you are the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights."

So here we come now to our service in verses 15 and 16. We are to shine as lights in the world and we are to hold forth the Word of Life. Here are two things we are to do. This is our service.

We are to shine as lights.

You remember Jesus said in John, chapter 8, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." He could say, "I am the light of the world." But He went back to glory. The torch is handed to us. Paul writes in the book of Ephesians, chapter 5 that we are children of light; we are children of the day. The same thing in Thessalonians, chapter 5, we are not of the night; we belong to the day. You have the same thing in Romans, chapter 13 and the same thing in Matthew, chapter 5, where Jesus said, "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven." In the midst of darkness, our job is to dispel that darkness. How can you do it? By shining as lights.

You remember the Apostle Paul could say in his defense before King Agrippa, in Acts, chapter 26, verse 18, where he said that God had called him to open eyes, to turn men from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God.

In Colossians, chapter 1, we're told that God has translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His own Son. We are to shine as lights.

You remember that when Jesus was here, He was the light of the world. In John chapter 1, verses 7-9, we learn that "in Him was light." John the Baptist was not that light, but he was sent to bear witness of that light. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

In John chapter 12, verse 35, Jesus said, "Walk while ye have the light. The night cometh when no man can walk." And in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world." And one could multiply the passages.

The purpose of light is to dispel darkness. There's no darkness in heaven. Heaven is full of His glory. There are no shadows, no darkness there. It's down here where we are to shine.

I remember one time in a Billy Graham meeting at night, as each one came into the stadium he was given a little candle. And during the course of

Billy Graham's message, all the lights went out and everybody lit his candle. And what did the light of the candle do? It dispelled darkness.

Now you may not shine like the sun in heaven; you may not shine like the stars. But, my friend, wherever you are, you can shine. You know, you can go into a dark room and strike a match. A little wee match dispels all the darkness in the room. You may be just one in a great deal of darkness; but, brother, if you're shining, you're dispelling darkness.

You know, one time a man said to me, "Mr. Mitchell, I want you to pray for me that I might get another job."

And I said, "What's the matter with the job you have?"

"Well," he said, "I'm the only Christian in the shop."

"Well," I said, "I'm going to pray against you. I'm just going to pray against you."

He said, "Don't do that."

"Well, listen. If you leave the shop, you'll get another job. You're satisfied with this job; you're satisfied with your wages. You're going to leave just because you're the only Christian in the shop? Isn't that why God has you there? If you leave your job, who's going to shine? Who's going to bear testimony by his life or by his words?"

You see, my friend, God puts you where you are.

You say to me, "Mr. Mitchell, if I were a preacher . . ."

"Well, you're not."

"If I were a teacher. . ."

"Well, you're not."

I don't know who you are or what you are. You say you're the weakest child of God. All right, I'll take your word for it, But wherever you are and whoever you are, He wants you to shine as lights. This is what He says here—as the sons of God in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation. Not in the midst of heaven, not in the midst of Christians, not in the midst of the church, but in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation among whom you shine. You shine as lights.

You know, I am fully persuaded that a lot of Christians excuse themselves by saying, "Well, if I were a missionary..." or "If I were under different circumstances..." or "If I were some place else, I'd shine for Christ."

No, you wouldn't. God has put you right where you are; and the best place for you to shine for the Lord is right where you are in the shop, in your office, in your kitchen, in the neighborhood, wherever you are. I'm not asking you to be a preacher. I'm not even asking you to go from door to door. I'm asking you to shine your very life, your very attitude to people, the motives that govern your life, to glorify the Saviour. "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Just as the moon receives its light from the sun, you and I are to shine down here. Only we are not reflectors. We're better than that. We radiate light.

You know, when I first started preaching, way up on the prairies of Canada, oftentimes I would go to a schoolhouse and have meetings. I would always carry some newspaper with me because one of the first jobs I did was to take the lamps off the side of the wall in the school house. I would clean the chimneys—they'd been smoked up. Now behind the chimney would be a reflector pushing the light into the room. We called them reflectors. And I used to think, "Well, that's wonderful."

But you know something better than that? Today you just switch the light on, and here we have electric light. We have the light coming from inside the bulb, radiating out. Ah, Christ lives in His people, and Christ lives in you, my friend. If you love the Saviour, if you have put your trust in Him, then He comes to live in you; and you're to shine right where you are for Christ. You may be the only one in the family, the only one in the office; but, friend, wherever you are, God has put you there to shine as a light.

And then the second thing is we are to hold forth the Word of Life as a testimony to the world. Jesus Christ could say not only "I am the light of the world," but He could also say, "I am the Bread of life." And here Paul takes these two things, and says you and I are to do that. We're to shine as lights—I repeat, not in heaven, but here on earth—and we're to hold forth the Word of Life. No wonder Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:9, "We are laborers together with God." He is the light of the world; we are to shine as lights. He is the Bread of Life; we are to hold forth the Word of Life.

My, what a responsibility!

I pray that God today may shine through you.

He's the One to do it!

He's the Light of the world, not you; but He wants you, my friend, to be that light—today!

Right where you are.

Right in your family.
And do it for His name's sake today.

Day 23

Philippians 2:12-16 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We again take the opportunity of talking to you from the Word of God in the book of Philippians, chapter 2. We're coming down into this amazing chapter where we're dealing with the believer's responsibility from verse 12 to 16.

We have been dealing with our privilege in verses 12 and 13, and then our walk and conduct in verses 14 and 15. We have discussed how we are to walk and where we walk. And in our last lesson we were dealing with our service in verses 15 and 16—how we are to shine as lights, holding forth the Word of Life. This is the two-fold ministry of every Christian; and, as we said in our last lesson, we are to shine as lights because we are the only ones in whom Christ dwells in the world. And it is through the believer that He must manifest Himself.

To me it is an astounding thing that God should limit Himself to men and women like you and me whom He has redeemed. Yet it's wonderful to know that we have been saved, forgiven every trespass, given eternal life. We have become the children of God. We are a separated people, the sons of God to shine as lights, holding forth the Word of Life.

May I just stop here a moment? This deals with our testimony of the Word of God to the world. If we keep silent, concerning Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, how is the world or how is man—the man and the woman on the street—whoever they may be—how are they going to hear about the Saviour? He's not going to send an angel.

I'm reminded of the verse by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:20 when he said, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Oh, think of it, my Christian friend! If we do not witness, they'll never hear. Here we've had the Word of God for nearly two thousand years, and I've got to confess that the church of Jesus Christ has been very slow in its testimony for Him. When I think of the fact that, comparatively, very,

very few men—young men and young women—are offering themselves to God, making themselves available to God to be His witnesses, to give forth the Word of Life on the various mission fields of the world.

Do you remember 1 Corinthians 15, verses 34 where Paul says, “Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God? I speak this to your shame.” I speak this to your shame. Many have not the knowledge of God. We are the sons of God in the world, holding forth the Word of Life. The entrance of the Word of God gives life. Thy Word is Spirit and it's Life. Jesus said, “Thy Word is truth.” We're born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. Nobody ever becomes a child of God apart from the Word of God because James says, “Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth” (1:18).

Think of it! If you and I do not shine as lights in our character, in our living before men, and if we do not hold forth the Word of Life, they will never hear of our Saviour. I tremble. I tremble when I think of the responsibility. I just tremble when I think of it, when I think of the dearth of the ministry of the Word of God! And I declare to you, too, my Christian friend, that God will honor His Word wherever it is given.

I'm talking to you, Sunday school teacher, young people's worker, pastor, teacher, evangelist, whoever you are, Christian worker. God will honor His Word in spite of the channel that is using it. And you and I are responsible to hold forth the Word of Life.

If our Saviour is the Bread of Life and we are related to Him and are indwelt by Him, then may we be available to God so that we shall become His channels to shine as lights and hold forth the Word of Life. He must do the shining; and, thank God, He will do the living and powering through us if we will just let Him.

The trouble is we get in the way; we want to do it, and we fizzle on the job. Oh, I wish in some way I could make it very, very clear to you, the tremendous responsibility of giving forth the Word of Life to our generation. If ever there was a time in the history of the Christian church when we needed men and women who would make themselves available to God for this, it's now.

I appeal to you, young men, and to you, young women, to become so, so acquainted with the Word of God, to have your mind so saturated with the Word of God that you'll become a vessel meet for the Master's use.

When I think of this last year, how few, how few there were who went to Southeast Asia as missionaries; how few went to Africa; how few went to South America; how few are going into the ministry at home!

I think of so many young people who in their high school days came to know the Saviour, and there was born in their hearts a great yearning to do something for God. But by the time they got through college, they were waylaid. They even went to Christian colleges, and still they were waylaid and got into the business world where their hearts are empty and fruitless and the purpose of God is thwarted because they wanted their own way. And the tragedy is sometimes older Christians encourage them in the path in which they walk, when God is looking for men and women who will shine as lights, who will hold forth the Word of Life.

And listen, my Christian friend, it may be you are a shut-in. It may be you can't get out very much. It may be you're getting down to the end of your life on earth; and, as you look back, so little has been done for the Lord. May I plead with you right where you are—in a nursing home, shut-in possibly, or in the hospital—yet you can manifest something of the fragrance of Christ, the sweetness of the Saviour, and hold forth the Word of Life.

You say, "Well, Mr. Mitchell, I can't read any more. I wish I could."

But you can speak a word for Him. Just that sweet smile, that devotion to the Saviour. You don't have to say very much. It's what you do; it's how you live that will manifest Him. I again declare to you these amazing things. We are to hold forth the Word of Life and testify using the Word of God. Oh, how will they hear if we keep silent?

Now there's one more thing in this, and you have it in verse 16—that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. Now our walk and conduct was in verses 14 and 15; our service was manifested in verses 15 and 16. And now, our hope comes at the end of verse 16—rejoicing "in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

What is the Apostle Paul saying? That he wants to be full of joy when the Lord Jesus comes. He wants to save these Philippian Christians among whom he has labored in much persecution. He wants to see them glorifying the Saviour. He wants to rejoice at the coming of the Lord that his labor has not been in vain in their midst.

I think John, the Apostle, had that in mind in 1 John, chapter 2, verse 28 where he says, “And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”

“And now, little children, abide in Him.” Stay in fellowship with Him. Abide in the Word that, when the Lord Jesus shall appear, we may have confidence, being bold to speak and not being ashamed before Him at His coming. Not to be ashamed! I wonder if it's possible that some Christians will be ashamed.

Did you ever stop to think that your pastor, whoever he may be, or your teacher may be ashamed at the coming of the Lord because you have not walked with Him, because you have not received the instruction given, because you have not obeyed the Word of God which was given unto you? John says, Oh, dear Christian friend, abide in Him so that when the Lord Jesus appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

And here Paul says, “That I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain,” that our labor among you Philippians will not be in vain. It will bear fruit. It will produce that which will bring glory to God so in that day when the Lord comes, “My cup will be filled full with joy.” He could say to the Thessalonian church in chapter 2:19, “Are not even ye” my crown of joy and rejoicing at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Or as dear Peter could say concerning the coming of the Lord, whom having not seen, we love; yet though we see Him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of souls (1 Peter 1:8). This is the great yearning of God's servants, that the people of God who have been taught the Scriptures might so heed them and follow after Him that they will rejoice in the day of Christ.

Now this is what we have here in chapter two of Philippians—the mind of Christ in humiliation and exaltation, and then the fruitage of that worked out in the believer's life.

It is our privilege to walk before God, shining as lights and holding forth the Word of Life so that when the Lord shall appear, we shall be filled with joy and rejoicing at His coming.

And may this be a wonderful day for you, Christian friend, a day of reveling in the presence of our Saviour and living in expectation of seeing Him Whom having not seen, you love.

And may the Lord wonderfully bless you today for His name's sake.

Day 24

Philippians 2:17-23

Good-day, friends. We rejoice in another wonderful opportunity for you and me to sit together and discuss the precious Word of God.

We're dealing here with the mind of Christ operating in His people. We are to walk as the children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. We are to shine as lights, holding forth the Word of Life. Our hope is the coming of the Lord.

Now reading on from there, we have three illustrations given to us of the mind of Christ working out in the lives of others. You remember that Christ was the pattern given to us in humiliation and exaltation. And, by the way, the only way up, someone said, the only way to be exalted is to be humbled; and how true it is.

Think how our Saviour humbled Himself, and God exalted Him. And when you and I take the place of humility and meekness, you can be sure of one thing: There will be exaltation in God's own time and place.

Now the first one given to us as an example of this is the Apostle Paul in verses 17 and 18.

2:17. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all,

2:18. For the same cause also do you joy, and rejoice with me.

The Apostle Paul was a man who was self-effaced. His life was a sacrifice for the people of God. He was so in love with the Saviour, was so given over to the Saviour, he has so put himself in the hands of the Saviour that the life of our Lord was revealed in and through him. He was a self-effaced man. The one great passion of his life was Christ. His was a poured-out life; if I can use these words: "his life was poured out as a drink offering to the Lord." A living sacrifice!

Do you remember death was scorned? Do you remember in 2 Timothy 4, reading verses 5 to 8, where Paul says, "I am about to be offered. The time of my departure is at hand." Here death is scorned. "I am about to be offered as a sacrifice. The time of my departure is at hand. My own life and my own death mean nothing as long as Christ is magnified."

I repeat, he lived a self-effaced life! He goes on to say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all those also that love His appearing (4:7-8).” He mentioned the same thing in Philippians chapter 1, verse 20: That “Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me, to live is Christ.” To die is “to be with Christ.”

We have the same thing in Romans 12, the first two verses—and I’m sure when Paul gave that exhortation, it was already working in his life—when he said, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,” that you give your body as present to God, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable, logical service, “and be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Here you have the mind of Christ, then operating in the Apostle Paul. This was the first illustration given to us in the chapter of Christ as the pattern, being worked out in his people.

Now the second one is the mind of Christ working out in Timothy. Read verses 19 to 24. This is true also of Timothy—a life where the will of God was preferred to self-will. Look at what he says.

2:19. But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

2:20. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally (genuinely) care for your state.

2:21. For all seek their own (things), not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.

2:22. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel;

2:23. Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.”

Now here Paul is in prison, and he says, “I’m thinking about you folk; you’re so on my heart.” And, by the way, what a heart this man had for God’s people! What a great bond there was between the Apostle Paul and these Philippian Christians. And you could expect this. They had suffered

together; they were in pain together; he had led them out of darkness into light, out of paganism into Christ.

You think of that old Philippian jailer; you think of that girl out of whom those demons were cast. Then you think of that wonderful woman, Lydia, a successful business woman. These were all in the Philippian church. It's a wonderful thing that there was a tremendous bond.

I think I would say this—there was a bond between Paul and the Philippian church that was not in any other church. My, how he loved this people! How he loved their devotion to Christ! And so he could say this, “I'm so in love with you and so concerned about you, I'm going to send Timothy to you. I want to know just how you're getting along. I want to be of good comfort when I hear of how you're doing.

Now I'm on verses 20 and 21 again.

2:20. I have no man likeminded, who will naturally (genuinely) care for your state. (I have no man like-minded who is genuine in his care for you.)

2:21. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

Paul is in prison, and he's concerned about these Christians in Philippi. Men are very, very scarce there. Those who are there are selfish; they've got a lot of unconcern for their brethren. And the reason for the scarcity of men is that they all seek their own things or, as one writer puts it, “For all seek their own selfish aims, reckless of the will of Christ.”

Now love never seeks her own (1 Corinthians 13). “I have no man like-minded who is genuine in his care for you.” One thinks of the Saviour the same way. Oh, how He loved His people.

I was just reading the other day of a man in Burma by the name of Sam Qualla, and this man was very brilliant. He was a fine Christian, and he refused a very lucrative position, a position that paid a lot of money, with the British government. And he refused it. What for? To go down and eat with the children of poverty. For two and a half years, he lived with the dregs of society in India, and more than 2,000 souls were saved and 30 churches were established.

Why? God found a man who didn't seek his own things; He found a man who was in love with the Saviour and in love with people. Self-effaced! The mind of Christ operating in Sam Qualla caused him to turn down a very lucrative job to reach the poverty-stricken people of Burma.

My friends, oh, my friends, will you pray with me that the Lord may thrust forth laborers into His harvest—men and women who have a real passion for Christ and a real burden for people. This is the need today.

Oh, it is so easy to be caught in this materialistic life and miss the compassion of Christ, miss the wonderful job of being a worker together with God, and miss being a channel usable in the hands of the Lord. I plead with your heart today, if you will now make yourself available to God. Just today, will you make yourself available to God to be a channel through whom He can display His tenderness and His love and His compassion?

My heart goes out to God's people. So many of them are untaught. They are hungry for joy and blessing because nobody seems to care, nobody seems to want to shepherd them.

I'd like to speak to your heart.

Christian friend, surely you can touch some heart today for our Saviour. That's why He saved you; that's why He loves you; that's why He indwells you—that you might be His channel to reach somebody today.

Won't you do it?

Won't you do it?

Just try it for today.

Say, "Lord Jesus, I'm putting myself in Your hands to be available to You, to be a channel of blessing to some heart today."

Today.

And I'm sure the Lord will do it, for He's the One Who will do it in you and He's the One Who'll do it through you.

He just wants a channel.

Why not offer yourself to Him—today.

Day 25

Philippians 2:19-30

Good-day, friends. It is my great joy and blessing again to come into your home or wherever you may be with an opportunity of studying together and meditating together on the things of Christ.

We are studying the book of Philippians, and we're in chapter 2; and if I may be allowed to read again in chapter 2, starting in verse 19:

2:19. But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state (or your condition).

2:20. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

2:21. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

2:22. But you know the proof of him that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

2:23. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

Remember that Paul is writing from prison. In the second chapter, he has been dealing with the mind of Christ, and that when the mind of Christ operates in a believer's life, that believer is enjoying divine life. This is the spiritual life. This is where the Lord wants you and me to live—not on a low plain, but on a high plain, a life lived to the glory of God.

And we found that the mind of Christ was one of humiliation and exaltation. When one is living in a place of humility before God, you can be assured of one thing—that He, in His own wonderful way and time, will exalt you. As the Scripture says, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." And so in verses 17 and 18, we have the mind of Christ working in Paul. He wasn't living for self; He was living for the Saviour.

And now we have the mind of Christ working in Timothy in verses 19 through 24. And again you have here a man whose heart was fixed upon the Lord. Paul is in prison, as I was saying in my last message, and he was wanting to send someone to this Philippian church. And again may I remind you how much he loved this people at Philippi. They had suffered together for the gospel's sake, and they had a rare place in the heart of Paul. He

wants to send somebody. But, you know, men are scarce. I mean, real men of God are scarce. As he said here,

2:20. For I have no man likeminded, who will be genuine in his care for your state.

2:21. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

I don't know whom I can send but him. As I said a moment ago, good men are very scarce, men who have a real concern for the people of God. And I can send Timothy because he's genuine in his love. And this was a real sacrifice for both Paul and Timothy.

And I would like to suggest that it would be a wonderful thing if you and I were to pray that the Lord would raise up men who are genuine in their love for the Saviour and their love for God's people.

And I don't mind repeating this: Our love for God is evident by obedience to His Word, and our love for God's people is evident by sacrifice. I meet some people at times who talk a lot about their love for the Saviour. But I see so little love for the people of God. Now this is not the mind of Christ.

With Paul, Christ was pre-eminent; with Timothy, self was effaced and Christ was the center of his love, of his affection, of his devotion; and, hence, it was evident by his love for God's people.

So when Paul looked for someone he could send, he could say, "I have no man just like Timothy who is genuine in his love for you as well as his love for the Saviour. I'm going to send him to you that I may know how you are getting along."

And then in verse 24 you have the Apostle Paul saying,

2:24. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly,

2:25. Yet I suppose it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother.

You remember in the first chapter he spoke of the fact that their prayers would turn to his salvation. Now he was not talking about the salvation of the soul of his person. He is talking about being delivered from prison. He was encouraging these Philippians to pray because, through their prayers, he expected to be saved from the position where he was in Rome as a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

So he said here in verse 24, he trusted that "in the Lord I myself shall come shortly" to you. He has confidence in the Lord of being set free. I

personally believe that the Apostle Paul was set free, and then later on he was again taken to Rome and eventually beheaded for the testimony for the Gospel.

Now we have had the mind of Christ operating in Paul and the mind of Christ operating in Timothy. Now from verse 25-30, we have the mind of Christ working in Epaphroditus.

2:25. I suppose it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

2:26. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

2:27. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

2:28. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

2:29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

2:30. Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."

And might I say of the apostle Paul—self was effaced and Christ was pre-eminent. Likewise the same was said of Timothy. You could also say it was true of two other men, Epaphroditus and Epaphras.

In Colossians, chapter 4, verse 12, Paul says, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, laboring fervently for you in prayers" and so on. You have Epaphras in Colossians, chapter 4, verse 12, and Epaphroditus in chapter 2 of Philippians.

Here you have men who are sold out to the Saviour, and I repeat it: God give us men today who have the same vision and make Christ the very center of attraction.

Look at this man in verse 25. He's my brother, he's my companion in labor, he's my fellow soldier, he's your messenger, and he's ministered to my wants. Here's a true companion—a man who was compassionate, who was humble, self-sacrificing and true. He was a brother in the Lord, a

companion of Paul's, and a fellow-soldier in the gospel of Christ, a messenger of the Word, and a minister to God's people.

And I'll tell you, it costs something. It costs something. Don't let anyone fool you, my friend, that when you and I or any of God's people will dedicate themselves to the Lord, it's going to cost something. It costs us nothing to be saved. Our Lord did the whole business. But to follow Him, to have the mind of Christ operating in us, we may have to suffer. Paul did, Timothy did, and so did Epaphroditus. He was nigh unto death for the gospel's sake.

And then Paul made a rather remarkable statement when He said in this passage, "Indeed, he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."

1:30. Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Did you ever stop to think of it? Here is a man who was sick even unto death for the gospel's sake. He suffered for the gospel's sake. And yet, I want to mark something. He was healed on the ground of the mercy of God.

Paul said, "God had mercy on me, too." I want you to mark this. I say this because there are those who believe—in fact, I've heard people demand that God heal somebody who is sick in body and I don't see any faith there; I see arrogance—but here he is healed on the ground of the mercy of God. And the mercy of God was displayed because of God's love for Epaphroditus and God's love for the Apostle Paul.

Here was a man who was willing to efface all self and pour out his life for the people of God, even unto death. He didn't regard his own life because of his great love for the people and his love for Christ and his love for Paul.

In other words, his life was his benediction. He did this because the mind of Christ was operating in him. You know, somebody has said,

"You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day,
By deeds that you do, by words that you say.
Men read what you write whether faithless or true.
Say, what is the Gospel according to you."

Here were three men, Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, who in the first century had the mind of Christ operating in them. These men were sold out to Christ. Self-will went out the window. They had only one great yearning—that the will of God be perfected.

And as you read these verses, you see the confidence of these men. You see the compassion of these men. Faithful, true men. And yet it cost them something.

Don't be surprised then, Christian friend. If you turn everything over to the Lord, you may have some tests you never dreamed of having. But remember, He is always with you in the test. I may not always understand the test—I'm sure Epaphroditus didn't understand why he should go through so much suffering, even unto death! But he rejoiced in the fact that he was counted worthy. He rejoiced in the fact that he was a fellow-worker with God and also was a companion of the Apostle Paul's.

And I just trust that it might be said of you and it might be said of me, what Paul said concerning Timothy, "I have no one who is like-minded and is genuine in his care for you, for all seek their own things, not the things that are Jesus Christ's."

I repeat it, when Paul looked for someone to send, he found Timothy who sought the things of Christ.

I wonder, my Christian friend, would you be picked out by God as one who sought the things of Christ and not the things of self?

I repeat it, when the mind of Christ is operating in the believer, the one passion of that believer will be the will of God, whatever it may be.

It may mean suffering.

It may even mean death, but it's in the will of God.

What a joy, what a privilege, what an honor it is that you and I can walk in the will of God whatever the cost may be.

And I would suggest that even today, you turn your whole affection, you turn your whole devotion over to the Saviour and let Him work out His life and His plan in—your—heart and life.

Day 26

Philippians 3:1

Good-day, friends. We come to you with studies in the book of Philippians. And I just trust that you will take your Bibles and turn with me to the third chapter.

We come to a part that is to my mind one of the most amazing passages in the history and life of Paul. We get a little intimation here of the passion of this man's heart for the Saviour. But before he discusses it, he takes up the question of what the flesh can do and doesn't do. In other words, in the first six verses, we are going to see things that hinder our knowing Christ.

If I were to give you a theme for chapter three, I would say "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering." This is Christian experience—to know Him. Not so much to know about Him, but to really know—Him. This is experimental knowledge.

Paul starts the chapter with certain things in the first six verses, things that hinder our really experiencing knowing Christ. And I want to say frankly that, when I read this passage over and over again, I find out how easy it is for us to want the flesh to behave, but we want to get some gratification out of it.

Now listen to what he says—

3:1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous.

He is saying, "I don't mind writing to you about these things because for you, it means safety." We are to rejoice in the Lord.

You know, it's easy to rejoice in the things of life. It's easy to rejoice when you get what you want. It's easy to rejoice when you have your own way. But here the ground of rejoicing for a Christian never changes: "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." He's ever on the ground of rejoicing. It never changes. We are not to rejoice in gifts or attainment or service, but we are to rejoice in Him.

You know, we're too often affected by our circumstances, and when our circumstances are not very good, we growl and we grumble; we're not

very good people to be with, are we, anyone of us? We get so occupied with ourselves; and, when circumstances are not so good, we expect everyone to sympathize with us—and, in fact, we sympathize with ourselves. But, my friend, when Christ is the source of our joy, we can rejoice over any circumstance.

And, by the way, this man Paul had a right to say that. When he wrote to these Philippians, I'm sure he remembered his experience at Philippi in Acts, chapter 16. When he went to Philippi, he went to a prayer meeting by the riverside and met a group of women, and the first convert in Europe was a successful business woman by the name of Lydia. And after she and her household came to know the Saviour, they took Paul and his party into her home.

And then he was opposed by Satanic forces; and then he was opposed by men; and then I find him in jail. He's been beaten up, and he's in the inner dungeon with the slime and the slaves and what have you and the smell and the filth of past prisoners. He was in the inner dungeon, his feet fast in the stocks. Talk about circumstances! If any man would growl and grumble, it would be here!

No, in fact, he could have said, "Lord, why should I be in this condition? Why should my feet be in the stocks? Why should my back be bleeding? Why should I be in this filthy place? Just because I love you? Just because I talk about you? Because I witness to men concerning you?"

No. He sang praises to the Lord. He and Silas sang so much that God heard and answered, and there was an earthquake, and everyone's bonds were loosed. You talk about the supernatural life; here it is. Circumstances were bad, but, you see, the ground for his joy hadn't changed. Rejoice in the Lord always! "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord," he says. Where else can you rejoice?

By the way, for those of you who are Bible students, it might be a very interesting study to find out what Christ is to the believer. For example, Christ is my Peace. You have this in Ephesians 2:14. He is our peace; He never changes. In Colossians 3:4, He's our Life; and here in Philippians, He's the source of our joy. He's the source of all knowledge in Colossians 2:3. He's the Source of all power, the power of resurrection and exaltation in Ephesians 1:19-22.

One could multiply these wonderful things.

What is Christ to us? Marvelous things! He never changes; hence, our joy should be filled full. And, by the way, this is what He wants of you and me; He wants our joy to be filled full. He doesn't want us to go around murmuring all the time, being sour. He wants us to be filled with joy.

So Paul says, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." I say again, these dear Philippians had suffered for the Gospel. Their circumstances were pretty tough, but so was Paul's. He had been in jail and beaten up in Philippi, and now he's in Rome, and he's chained to soldiers. Yet he could say "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord, and to write to you is not going to be a hard thing, because I have you in my heart." See, that's what you have in the first verse, and as I see it, we are affected by circumstances.

He goes on to say, "I want to write to you, and it's not too hard for me to do this, but for you it is safe." Let me repeat what I said in chapter 2. What a tremendous place the people of God had upon this man's heart.

My Christian friend, I wonder if I dare say this to you or ask you this question, "Do you have the people of God on your heart?" I don't mean so you can criticize them or be censorious and sit like a judge or jury.. I mean to have them upon your heart so that you are full of love for them, that you pray for them, that you encourage them and, if need be, to instruct them. Oh, no, but with a heart full of compassion and tenderness for the people of God.

You know, I find so many Christians who are in great, great need with tests and trials of life. Some are in very, very difficult circumstances; and yet Paul says, they are no worse than mine. I'm a prisoner of Jesus Christ, I'm here at Rome chained to soldiers, I've been beaten up, I've been persecuted. Yet he could say, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. And I'm so desirous, just so desirous for your safety that ye might be kept from the things that would hinder your really knowing Christ in your experience."

And this is how he starts the chapter.

I wanted to get this upon your heart as we go into these verses. This man is burdened that God's people be free from anything and everything that would blur the vision of Christ, that would prevent their enjoying divine life, that would hinder their walking on a high plain of spirituality, that would hinder their being useful vessels for the Lord. This is the burden of his heart.

And you know, it's not the bad things that keep Christians from going on with God. Sometimes it's the good things of life, things that people run

after, other things that hinder our really knowing and experiencing Christ Jesus. And I want to leave this with you today. As you read the Word of God, will you remember that Jesus Christ never changes—as Hebrews 13 says, “The same yesterday, today, and forever”—and He is the ground not only for your peace, He’s not only the ground of righteousness for us, but He’s also the ground of our joy. You remember, at the last verse of John 16, He could say, “In Me, you can have peace. In the world you’ll have tribulation. But cheer up, I have overcome the world.”

Isn’t it wonderful that you and I can live and walk—whatever our circumstance may be—walk in fellowship with God and enjoy His strength and the joy and peace that are beyond the understanding of men!

Now the Lord has it for you; He has it for me; but we must appropriate this. We must have Christ on our hearts.

Now why don’t you go over this the rest of this day? I don’t know what your past has been. It doesn’t matter. You can’t bring it back. But won’t you start and enjoy Christ in your life today?

Today!

Yes, His strength and joy and peace can be yours today.

And the Lord wonderfully bless you for His name’s sake.

Day 27

Philippians 3:1-3

Good-day, friends. Again we come to you with our studies in the book of Philippians and here we are dealing in the first six verses with things that hinder our knowing Him.

3:1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

3:2. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3:3. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Now we were saying in our last lesson that the ground for our rejoicing as Christians is in the Lord. “Rejoice in the Lord.” And too often we believers are affected by our circumstances when we ought to be rejoicing in the Saviour.

You know, that Christian maturity is just that—when you can come to the place where you can rejoice in spite of your circumstances. That’s victory, that’s joy, that’s blessing, that’s spiritual power.

Now in verse 2, you’ll notice that he says three times, “Beware, beware, beware.” Or, if I could use a little different touch, keep your eyes open. Just keep your own eyes open. Look out for anything that has to do with the flesh. Look out for anything that will blur your vision for Christ. Look out for any doctrine that does not make Christ the center. You be careful about anything that you hear and see with respect to the flesh.

Remember what Jesus said in John 3: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh (and can’t be anything else but flesh), and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.”

In the book of Galatians, we read in chapter 5: “The Spirit desireth against the flesh, and the flesh desireth against the spirit: and these are contrary the one to the other.” And I wish we Christians, we who love the Saviour, could see the fact, this fact, that nothing the flesh can do can satisfy God.

Indeed, in the book of Romans, chapter 8, verses 7 and 8, it says, “the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

And he goes on to say, “But you are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you.” In other words, the flesh itself cannot do anything that will please God. God has no confidence in anybody’s flesh, neither yours nor mine.

Let this be very clear in your mind. There was only one man who ever walked the face of the earth of whom God said, twice, “This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.” But when the Spirit of God indwells a person, we can still fall back into sin. And this is true of all Christians, carnal Christians as well as spiritual Christians, because it was to a carnal group that Paul wrote, “Your bodies are the sanctuaries of the Holy Spirit.”—The trouble is too often, too often we allow the things of the flesh to hinder the work of the Spirit of God in our lives.

Now mark this threefold warning in verse 2. Beware—keep your eyes open. The first thing is “Beware of dogs.” Now who are they? Well, they are the strangers to grace. They’re the false teachers. In fact, the Apostle Peter writes a whole chapter on false teachers in 2 Peter, chapter 2; and Paul in Colossians, chapter 2, also writes about and warns concerning false teachers, false philosophy, and vain reasonings of men.

If I were taking up 2 Peter, I’d point out that in chapter 2 these false teachers deny the fact of Christ’s second coming; for “since the fathers fell asleep,” say they, “everything continues as it was from the beginning,” and of this they are willfully, willingly ignorant. You be careful of false teachers. And you remember 2 Peter, chapter 2, ends up where Peter says they are wells without water, clouds carried with a tempest. There is no reality to them. They’re just like dogs and sows. They like the mud and the filth and the sin. Dogs. Watch out. Be on the alert. Keep your eyes open. Beware of dogs or false teachers.

And the second one is “Beware of evil workers.” And this has to do with their conduct, and their conduct equals their hearts. You remember in 2 Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 13 and 14, where it speaks of the fact that Satan himself will come as an angel of light for the purpose of deceiving the very elect if it were possible.

Our Lord spoke of some of these fellows in Matthew, chapter 7, verses 22-23, where He said, “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?” Have we not performed miracles in your name, have we not cast out demons in your name? Here were preachers who performed

miracles, cast out demons, did wonderful things in the name of Jesus, and yet, Jesus said, “Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you.”

Beware of false teachers. Beware of these who would seek to lead you astray by their evil works and their conduct which is a manifestation of what their hearts are like.

And the third warning: “Beware of the concision.” Now these are religious forms and ceremonies that people use to add to the sufficiency of Christ. Beware of anything that adds to the work of Christ for sinners.

Now that doesn't sound like a very difficult one, does it? But, my friend, may I say that too many, even among those who profess the name of the Saviour, too many seek to add to the work of Christ. Beware of the concision, of these who would add religious works and religious ceremonies to the sufficiency of Christ. They deny the sufficiency of Christ, and, by the way, there's a whole epistle of Paul written on this and that's the book of Galatians. It is so easy, so easy for the religious flesh to add something. It makes you feel good. “I've done this, I've done that, I've had this rite, I've had that ordinance.”

But, my friend, this is false. When Christ died, He did a perfect work. He did a complete work. And when sinners come and accept Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour, they receive a perfect, complete, eternal salvation.

Beware of those who would turn your heart away from the sufficiency of Christ. They are those religious people who would get your mind occupied with what *you* do—some religious thing, some good thing that makes you feel good to add to the work of Christ.

I remember one time, some years ago, a preacher saying, “Well, brother, you better get baptized and make the thing sure.”

Now I'm not opposed to baptism, but no, no rite of baptism or anything else can make sure your salvation. Christ is the Saviour. He's a perfect Saviour; He's a complete Saviour. And you know, the flesh is so subtle; the flesh is so, so subtle; it wants to take a little credit for itself.

You know, we sing,

“I need no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.”

That is a complete job.

“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
On Christ the Solid Rock I stand.
All other ground is sinking sand.”

And if I’m talking to any person today—you’re listening to my voice—and you’ve never come into right relationship with the Saviour, you’ve never received into your life as the One who died for you, my friend, we offer you a perfect, complete, eternal, satisfying Saviour, Who guarantees His salvation with the resurrection from the dead.

And He is saying to you today, “Come unto Me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, I will give you rest.” Come as you are, He is saying, come with your burdens, come with your sin. Come just as you are, and He will redeem you, save you, make you a child of God. You can’t add one thing to the work of Christ.

So Paul here is saying, “Beware of dogs (false teachers); beware of evil workers (their lives equal to what their hearts are); beware of the concision. Beware of those who talk glibly about the Saviour, but whose lives are evil. Beware of those who are always boosting some religious ordinance or something that you must do to be saved and you must do to be kept saved. Christ is a perfect, complete Saviour!

My friend, if you have put your trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour, why don’t you revel in Him today? Thank God that He’s a real, perfect, eternal Saviour, a complete Saviour.

And if I’m talking to you, and you’ve never accepted Christ as your own personal Saviour, I would urge upon you now, while I’m talking to you, bow your heart, your head before Him, receive Him as your own personal Saviour. That means put your trust in Him.

And the Lord bless you for His name’s sake.

Day 28

Philippians 3:3-6

Good-day, friends. What an opportunity is ours in the study of the book of Philippians, chapter 3, as we take up the Apostle Paul's testimony and especially the things that would hinder our knowing the Saviour in a wonderful way, in a real way. This knowledge that I might know Him is experimental knowledge.

We were dealing in our last lesson with dogs and false teachers and religious unbelievers who tell you that God will do something for you if you do something for God.

Now Paul is here dealing with things that hinder our really knowing the Saviour. He has just declared in verse 2 these three bewares, telling us to keep our eyes open, to be on the lookout for those things that would boost the flesh and minimize the work of Christ. And then we have in verse 3 what true worship and rejoicing is; and, by the way, these are the marks of a real believer.

3:3. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

“We are...verse 3.” Mark those three things in that verse. We worship God in the spirit; there's no room for the flesh at all. We come with a heart that is exercised, not something that is puffed up and stirred up. We come with a heart that is exercised by the Spirit of God. You remember, Jesus said to the woman at the well in John, chapter 4:24, “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” There's no room for the flesh, not a bit of room. We worship God in spirit.

The second thing in the verse is that we rejoice in Jesus Christ, not in the flesh, not in self. We rejoice in Him because He is sufficient for all our need. We have no need to trust in the flesh; we trust Him. My, how the Lord loves to have us trust Him! I don't know of anything that delights the heart of God more than to have His people really trust Him, fully trust Him. Not Christ plus what I do. Not a little Christ and a big I. No, Christ alone is sufficient. So we rejoice in Jesus Christ; and, instead of rejoicing in the flesh, we rejoice in the One Who is our all-sufficient Saviour.

And then we have “have no confidence in the flesh.” Remember this—our true faith is in Christ, our trust is in Christ, our confidence is in Christ; not in the flesh. We renounce all confidence in the flesh. God has no confidence in anybody’s flesh, neither yours nor mine; and when we come to the place of seeing that the Lord Jesus is a perfect Saviour, then we can worship God in spirit and in truth. This is not something we pump up, but a heart that’s really in love with the Saviour, really in love with the Saviour. Not just to talk about it, but we enjoy a real life in the Saviour.

And we rejoice in Jesus Christ. We don’t rejoice in what the flesh thinks it can do or has done or hopes to do, but we rejoice in Jesus Christ because He is sufficient for all our need. And then we renounce all confidence in the flesh because God does that. He has no confidence in anybody’s flesh except, as I said a while ago, except His own precious Son, Jesus Christ, the One with whom He was well-pleased. So you have in this verse the three-fold aspect of a real believer who worships God in the spirit, rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh.

Now we come to verses 4 to 6, Paul’s own testimony. And here’s an amazing thing—Paul’s past was one of self-righteousness, and the religious flesh has a way of hindering our experiencing Christ. I want to repeat that. The religious flesh, whether it’s yours or mine or Paul’s or anybody else’s, the religious flesh has a way of hindering our really enjoying Christ.

Now I know I’m making a strong statement here on that, because it’s so easy for us to glory in something that we do. We get a great deal of satisfaction out of things we do for the Saviour. Now there are certain rights in that we are workers together with God. He takes us and uses our bodies and all the gifts He has given to us. He uses them for his glory; but we still glory in the Lord, not in the flesh.

Now Paul here begins to use his own experience to tell us of things that hindered his really knowing the Saviour. Notice his birth, verses 4 to 6, chapter 3 of Philippians. He says, verse 4:

- 3:4. Though I might also have confidence in flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:
- 3:5. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;
- 3:6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

A man can have all those things and be wrong. Well-born, he was a real Jew. Look at his birth. He was a real Hebrew; he wasn't a proselyte. He could tell you his tribe, "I belong to the tribe of Benjamin." He was proud of his birth, proud of his race, proud of his tribe: I belong to the tribe of Benjamin. This man Paul was a real Jew! Mark his position. He was a Pharisee. "As touching the law, I'm a Pharisee."

If I were to use present-day words, he could say, "I wasn't a Sadducee; I wasn't a liberal. I wasn't one of those who deny the supernatural; I wasn't one of those who deny the verbal inspiration of Scripture. I was a Pharisee. I was a fundamentalist; I was an evangelical." (I'm using those words that we use today.) He was a conservative in theology, a Pharisee, a stickler for the Law.

And then concerning zeal—persecuting the church. And mark you, my friend, this zeal of Paul, when he persecuted the early Christians, was because of his zeal for God. He was going to stamp out this terrible way—the people of the way who worship Jesus, the One who was crucified, the One who became a curse. "I'm going to stamp this thing out." And he had such a place of prominence that he was held in confidence by the high priests who gave him papers and authority to go to Damascus and put the Christians in jail. And he had done this before around Jerusalem.

He stood by the side of the ones who stoned Stephen, the early church martyr. This man [Paul] was a zealot for God, but he was wrong. You know, people can be zealous for God and still be wrong. A person today can be very zealous for his church and be wrong and zealous for his denomination and be wrong and zealous for religious feelings and experiences and ceremonies and be wrong! What's Paul talking about? These are the things in which men glory. These are the things that hinder people from reveling in Christ Jesus.

And, my friend, I know what I'm talking about. You and I have the same experiences. It's so easy for us, so natural for us, so logical for us to *do* something to merit favor with God; and, my friend, you just can't merit favor with God. God has given us a Saviour; God has given to us a Lord. As we had in the preceding chapter, where Paul had the mind of Christ: He was sold out to the Saviour, not to religious zeal, not to something of the flesh, but to God Himself!

I ask you the question today, have you got enough zeal?

Is it for Christ? Or are you proud of it?

Is your heart in love with Him?

Are you full of zeal for Christ Himself?

Are you in love with the Saviour?

Or are you in love with yourself? Are you in love with the flesh?

My friend, this is what he is talking about. You see, it's not the bad things that keep us from the Saviour and the enjoyment of the Saviour. Oftentimes, and most of the time, it's the good things that keep us from enjoying Him.

Think about that today and make Christ the very center of your life, of your devotion, of your affection, and of your love.

And the Lord bless you for His own name's sake.

Day 29

Philippians 3:7-11

Good-day, friends. It is our great desire that people come to know the Word of God. How else can people know the things of God if we do not spend time in the Word of God? And you know, we're not left to our own resources. If you love the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, then the Spirit of God indwells you and, as our Saviour could say in John 16, "When He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth. He will take the things of Mine and show them unto you. He will show you things to come." And if you are really a believer in the Lord Jesus, then, my friend, you have the Spirit of God as your teacher; and He is willing and waiting to take the Word and make it live in your life.

How glad I am that Jesus could say, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." And our Lord could say, "Thy Word is truth." And so it is our desire to unveil as far as we can the marvelous revelation of Christ, His work for men and women, His care for His own people, His return to the earth in power and great glory.

Indeed I want to talk to you personally, to sit down and talk to you about these wonderful things that God has given to us in His Word.

We're dealing in the book of Philippians in chapter 3, and in the first 6 verses of this chapter. We're talking about things that hinder us from really knowing Christ. Now it's not a mental knowledge that I'm talking about. I believe that the Spirit of God here has reference rather to knowing Christ experimentally, that is, the enjoyment of Christ Himself.

You know, it's a wonderful thing, when you think of it, that you and I who were sinners can now be redeemed, can become a child of the living God, can be pronounced righteous by Him, indwelt by His Spirit, and then to grow in the grace and knowledge of God, to really enjoy Christ for Himself. We had this in chapter 2; now we have it in chapter 3. In fact, the theme of chapter 3 is "that I might know Christ"—in a very intimate way; but there are things that hinder our knowing Christ in an intimate way. This is what Paul is dealing with in the first six verses.

You remember, he has warned us in verse 2 of certain false religious leaders, false teachers, those who would seek to deny the sufficiency of

Christ and would get you occupied with yourself and your own feelings, your own experiences and your own religious works rather than the person of Christ. And he takes his own experiences in verses 4 to 6 and speaks of the fact that there was a time when he was very, very religious.

Indeed, if you have his own testimony—if I may be allowed to do this again—he was a real Jew, a pure Hebrew. He could even tell his tribe; he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. He was not a proselyte; he was a real Jew. And he was circumcised the eighth day. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. In his position he was a Pharisee; that is, he was a stickler for the Word of God and especially for the law of Moses. It is true that the Pharisees pushed the Word of God beyond what I believe was the intent of the Spirit of God. Paul would be called, in this day, in our day, one who was an ultra-conservative. He would be called by some an ultra-fundamentalist.

There was one thing he was not; he was not a Sadducee. Sadducees, you remember, in our Lord's day and in Paul's day, were the men in Israel, religious leaders, who denied the supernatural. They denied the resurrection; they denied the miraculous, the things that God would do. They were the modernists of the day; they believed in man, entirely in man. The question of a supernatural God doing supernatural things was entirely out of their range of knowledge.

Nor was Paul a Herodian. The Herodians were the religious politicians of the day. No, Paul was a Pharisee.

And then he said, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church." Do you remember in Corinthians 15 he could say, "I am not meet to be called an Apostle because I persecuted the church of God." And you remember how he persecuted the church of God. In fact, on the road to Damascus, when he met the Saviour, he was going to that city to put the Christians in prison. He had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge.

A great many people are just like this. They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Religious works, religious organizations, religious things occupy them. It's of the flesh; it's the religious flesh. And these are the things hindering our knowing and experiencing the wonderful Son of God. I'm pressing this to your heart because Paul is so desirous of our realizing that it's not the bad flesh, not so much the so-called sinful flesh; it's not the bad things of life that hinder our knowing Christ so much. It is sometimes the good things, the religious things.

And then he goes on to say in verse 6, “Touching the righteousness of the law, blameless.” In other words, he was a man devoted to what he believed. That is, I take it, that he walked according to the standards of the Law; he did openly all the things the Law demanded. Blameless!

My, what a man this man Paul was before he met Christ. Pure Hebrew, a Pharisee, a conservative in theology, a zealot for God and, touching the righteousness in the Law, blameless. But all these things hindered his knowing Christ.

My friend, is it not true—can I say this—really, really honestly to us Christians, it’s not the bad things of life that hinder our knowing Christ. Oftentimes it’s the good things. We choose the good, and we miss the best. And so often Christ ceases to be the center of our affection, of our devotion, of our lives.

I know what I’m talking about. I’ve been a minister of the Word of God for a great many years. I know how subtle this thing is. We can be a teacher of the Word of God, a preacher of the Gospel and give all our time to the things of Christ and to the things of the church and still miss the life in Christ. “These things,” says Paul, “which were gain to me, I count them loss for Christ.”

Now something must have happened for Paul to do this. Something must have happened. Let me read it in verses 7-11:

3:7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

3:8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

3:9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

3:10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

3:11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of (as from among) the dead.

Now when you come to this, you see this man’s great passion. I don’t know of any scripture that reveals the heart of Paul more than this. As I said a moment ago, and I repeat it. Here’s a man who was very sincere, very

devoted, very religious , a zealot for God—but wrong. He had to be saved. You see, my friend, sincerity is not enough. It is not sufficient. You must have Christ.

People tell me, “As long as I’m sincere, I must be all right.”

My friend, that’s far from the truth. You’re not saved by your sincerity, by your religion, by your good works. Christ is the Saviour. I know I’ve said this before, but I’m going to repeat it because I’m meeting it all the time, in witnessing to people who often say, “Why, Mr. Mitchell, I’m a very sincere man or woman. I do the best I can for God. Now what more does God want?”

My friend, He doesn’t want what you can do. Did you hear what I said? He doesn’t want what you can do. You’re not saved by work you can do. I am saved by another. I’m saved by God’s wonderful Son, Jesus Christ. He came. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He died and was buried, and God raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavens to be a Prince and a Saviour. And He’s an all-sufficient Saviour. He’s a perfect Saviour. You can’t add to what He has done. But the religious flesh would love to add to what Christ has done. We would like to say it is Christ plus my sincerity. It is Christ plus me, Christ plus what I can do or what I hope to do.

Paul says, “All these things that were gain to me. I count them loss for Christ.” What had happened? Paul had caught a glimpse of the Saviour. And when Paul caught a glimpse of the Saviour, all that he’d been trusting, all that he had been depending upon was just like the refuse of the streets. He had a complete reversal of values once he saw the Saviour.

And you know, I’m afraid this is so today. We’ve been so occupied with our goodness, our religious ceremonies, and what we can do, we have in some way been blind to the beauty and the glory and the righteousness of God’s precious Son.

Do you see what I want you to do? I want you to know something about the Saviour. I want you to fall in love with Jesus, God’s beloved Son. And the reason you are trusting the works you are doing, the reason you are trusting religious feelings and zeal and even a zeal for God is because you’ve never seen Him in His beauty, in His righteousness, in the perfection not only of His character but perfection of His work for lost men and women.

Believer in Christ, why don't you revel in Him?

Forget your deadly doing, and just be occupied with the Saviour. Just for today, will you? We'll talk about tomorrow, but for today, will you do that? And may the Lord wonderfully bless you.

Day 30

Philippians 3:7-11 (continued)

Good-day, friends. I just trust that you who have been reading the book of joy and rejoicing, the book of Christian experience, the book of Philippians are rejoicing in the Lord.

Beware of those who would seek to thwart the work of God in your heart, who would seek to blur your vision of the Saviour, and who do it by false teaching, who do it by religious flesh. Paul in verses 4 to 6 of this third chapter speaks of this for it was the thing that hindered him. He was well-born. He was a conservative in theology. He was a zealot for God. As touching the law, the righteousness in the law, he was blameless. And all these things that were gain to him, he counted them loss of Christ.

What made this man turn his back on all his religious feelings and religious doings and just trust Jesus? He caught a glimpse of the Saviour. You know that marvelous verse in Ephesians 1:6—do you remember it?—that God has accepted us in the beloved, that God sees the man in Christ in all the beauty, in all the merit, in all the righteousness of the Saviour. And once you see Him as a perfect, all-sufficient Saviour, my friend, you begin to realize that these other things are not worth anything. As Paul here says, he just counted them as the refuse of the street, just fit for the ash can once he saw Christ in His beauty, in His righteousness.

Oh, friend, today, I wish in some way I could picture to you the Lord Jesus Christ as He really is. But you read the Word of God, and you'll find it. Does Christ understand you? Is He full of compassion? Is He tender? Does He know all about you? Yes. Yes. Does He ever leave you? No. Does He love you? Yes. Do your failures affect His love? No. No.

Oh, read the first four books of the New Testament, the four Gospels, and then read through the epistles of Paul, through Hebrews, and so on. My, what a Saviour we have! And I tell you very frankly and bluntly that once you catch a glimpse of the Lord Jesus in His sufficiency, in the perfection of His work for you, you'll never again trust the flesh, even good flesh, even religious flesh, moral flesh. And Paul could say in verse 8,

3:8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss

of all things, and do count them but dung—(what for?)—that I might win Christ.

All the past with its attainments is just loss compared to knowing Christ. The knowledge of Christ is so far superior, so far more wonderful, that Paul is glad to empty his life of everything that he has just to know Christ! Just to experience Christ!

You see, he didn't suffer the loss of bad things. We expect when a person accepts the Saviour, certain things will drop out of his life, things that are corrupt, things that dishonor God. We expect that. The world expects it. If you want to know how a Christian should live, you ask the man of the world. He'll tell you very quickly what he expects of Christians. But sometimes we hate to give up good things—to give up sometimes even religious things, and to give them up if you're trusting them, especially!

Now does that mean that we're not going to do good things anymore? Does that mean we're not going to be in the service of the Lord anymore? Well, of course not. But if you're trusting those things instead of Christ—

This is the thing. Don't trust them; because, if you trust them, it means that they become the object of your affection and that Christ is pushed out of the picture.

Paul says, 'I'm going to push these things out of the picture, if it's going to hinder my knowing Him in a very, very vital way. In fact, I count everything but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but refuse—just fit for the ashcan—just to know Christ, just to win Christ.

Now he is not writing about being saved. Paul was saved. Ephesians 2:8 you all know, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." In Titus 3:5, Paul wrote, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."

Well, what's he talking about then: to win Christ? It's to experience Christ in the life, to be satisfied with nothing less—and by the way, nothing more than Christ.

I ask you a simple question. Can Christ satisfy your heart? Can Christ meet the needs of your heart and your life?

You say, of course, He can.

Then why don't you trust Him? Why do you trust the flesh? Why do you trust men? Why do you trust yourself?

Paul says that having caught a glimpse of my Saviour in all His beauty and glory and righteousness, I count everything but loss just to know Him, just to be found in Him, just to win Christ. What a thing!

And then when you get down to verse 9, an amazing verse, "And be found in Him." I count everything but loss to be found in Him, "not having mine own righteousness, which is (by works) of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Now he comes to this amazing truth again of righteousness. You are no longer filled with filthy rags, no longer with self-righteousness. I count the whole thing loss to be found in Christ's righteousness.

Do you know, in 1 Corinthians 1:30, Paul writes, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus," who in the wisdom of God has been made unto us righteousness. And Romans, chapter 10, verse 4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." And 2 Corinthians 5:21, God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

I tell you, friend, I don't know of any doctrine in the Bible that grips my heart more and thrills me more than this fact when Paul says, "I'm going to be found in Christ, not having any righteousness of my own." Isaiah 64:6 says that our righteousness is in God's sight as filthy rags.

Job could say, "Though I wash myself with snow water and be ever so clean, my very clothes will abhor me." To be found in Him righteous! And may I suggest to your thinking, my friend, there's one righteousness and that's God's. Time would fail to go back into the book of Romans, chapter 3, 21-22, "But now the righteousness of God without the law (works) is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe"—everyone—Jew or Gentile. And he goes on to say, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified (declared righteous) by faith without the deeds of the law."

In Romans, chapter 4, verse 5, he says, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Therefore, being declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God. "Being declared righteous through His blood, we shall be saved

from wrath through Him.” I’m still quoting from the book of Romans 5:1 and 9. And one could go on down into chapter 8, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?” To whom? To the one who is simply trusting in Jesus.

Friend, may I ask you a question? Are you trusting in Jesus alone: a-l-o-n-e? Or is it Christ plus what you do? Christ plus some ceremony? Is it Christ plus some religious act? Or is it Christ alone? Christ alone.

Again let me quote a verse of a song: “I need no other argument, I need no other plea, It is enough that Jesus died, And that He died for me.”

Oh, friend, it’s a wonderful thing to know that you and I can come into the presence of God clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Because we’re clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we have peace with God. We’re no longer at enmity, and you and I can come at any time into the presence of God.

I tell you, when Paul saw this, he could say, “I count everything but loss.” What for? For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but refuse—fit for the ashcan—to win Christ, to be found in Him, having the righteousness of God, not of my own. All His.

Friend, my friend, listen. This is just the simple Gospel: That He who knew no sin—Jesus Christ, who knew no sin—was made sin for you and me who knew no righteousness that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Wonderful thing! We do not stand before God in self-righteousness or in legal righteousness. We stand before God in all the righteousness of Christ, accepted in the Beloved.

I repeat it. When Paul saw this, when Paul saw this—I count everything else worthless, absolutely worthless just to be found in Him. My friend, have you seen the Saviour in all His beauty? Have you seen Him in all His righteousness? This wonderful, holy, sinless, righteous Son of God?

And then to know that He loved you and me enough to die for us to put away sin, corruption, judgment, death and set you and me free! To fit us to stand in the presence of God in all His righteousness! The righteousness of God! Oh, friend, what a Saviour we have. What a salvation is this. May God open your eyes. May God open my eyes to see more and more of the beauty and glory of our Saviour. Then we will have a complete reversal of

values. Then we begin to enjoy Christ for Himself. Instead of being occupied with ourselves or people, we'll be occupied with Him.

May this be your joy today for His name's sake.

Day 31

Philippians 3:7-11 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We're in Philippians, chapter 3, and I would like to read again if I may from verse 7, where we have this great desire and aim of the apostle Paul, in verses 7-11.

3:7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

3:8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

3:9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

3:10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

3:11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Now we've been dealing with the Apostle Paul's first of all giving us the things that would hinder our knowing Him, such as things of the flesh. And remember God has no confidence in anybody's flesh. Paul here is willing to count all things loss. In fact, he had suffered the loss of all things, just to win Christ. I tell you it's a wonderful thing.

You know, this is where we fail. We hang up on things and experiences and movements and tradition. We depend on anything and everything but not just Christ; and Paul says, I count everything but loss, anything that would hinder my experiencing the Saviour, knowing Him in a very intimate, personal way. I count everything but loss. I give up good things if need be, just to know Christ, and to win Christ, and then to be found in Him, righteous (verse 9)—no longer dressed in filthy rags. Indeed, self-righteousness means loss; Christ's righteousness means gain.

It's a wonderful thing: Christ is our righteousness. And I again repeat it, once the Apostle Paul saw Christ as his righteousness, everything else was no good. The flesh could go to one side. He wouldn't have any more place for it because he was trusting implicitly in Christ.

Now when you come to verse 10, we come to the, shall I say, the very heart cry of Paul. He counted all things but loss, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.” Mark these three things, will you today, please? That I might know Him. I repeat it again. He’s talking here about personal fellowship with Christ, an intimacy, to live with Him, to revel in Him.

You know the old statement that you do not really know anybody until you live with him, and sometimes it takes a long time even when you’re living with him to know him. Friends, may I say you’ll never really know Christ as He really is. You’ll not know Him in your own heart’s experience unless you live with Him.

I think that’s the cry of Paul in Philippians 3, when he said, he prayed that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that Christ may dwell down in our heart, that Christ might have the run of the house. Oh, says Paul, just to know Him. I count everything but loss just to know Him. All the advantages of life, all the good things of life, all the religious activity, I’m willing to give everything up just to know Him.

My friend, this is a passion. This man is in love with the Saviour. And you know, to be honest with you, how much of Christ do you know? I mean in your experience? How much of Christ do I know? I’m afraid very, very little—very, very little. Here was an intimacy, a cry of a human heart for a real intimate, personal knowledge of the Saviour. “That I may know Him.”

I always think of Abraham. Do you remember that three times in the Bible Abraham is called the friend of God—in 2 Chronicles 20:7, in Isaiah, and then in James 2:23. In fact, Isaiah 41:8 quotes God saying, “Abraham, My friend.” Oh, here’s an intimacy that God wants. In fact, I’ll go so far as to say that in some way the Apostle Paul had caught a glimpse, a little glimpse of the yearning of the heart of God for fellowship with the ones He has redeemed, His children.

Oh, that I might know him! Job cried out, “Oh, that I might know where I might Him!” Well, we’ve found Him. We can say with Andrew, “We have found Him.” We can say with Philip, “We have found Him.” You’ll find that in John’s Gospel, chapter 1. Can we say this to somebody today? “We have found Him!”

Today men are trying anything and everything to get personal satisfaction. Different movements are striking out. Young people are following different movements and different ways, trying to get some reality out of life. And it's an amazing thing, we'll go anywhere and everywhere; we'll try anything and everything but Christ.

As I started to say about Abraham, he had had a glimpse of the heart of God. He yearned for God, and God met that yearning. And you remember in the 18th chapter of the book of Genesis, verse 17, God said to Abraham, Shall I hide from Abraham what I'm going to do? If I can put a little word in there—"Shall I hide from my friend, Abraham, what I'm going to do?"

Oh, here's an intimacy. Here's a life in God, something that the world knows nothing about, something that most Christians know nothing about. I wish I knew more about it, don't you? This life in Christ!

But listen, friend, it doesn't cost us anything to become a child of God. He has done a perfect work at the cross. But, oh, I tell you, to know Him is going to cost you everything.

Paul says, "These things that were gain to me, I count them loss for Christ. I count *everything* but loss, just for the *excellency* of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things that I might know Him."

Personalized intimacy! To know Him. To live a life with Him, every hour, every day, with Christ on your heart. The enjoyment of Christ.

Ah, this is spiritual life. This is the spirit-filled life.

"Oh, but, Mr. Mitchell, if I were Spirit-filled, I'd be doing all kinds of things."

No, you wouldn't; no, you wouldn't. What is a spiritual life? What's a Spirit-filled life? The enjoyment of Christ. That I may know Him. A passion, a love, a yearning for the Son of God Himself. Not for the things He can give, not even for the things that He does. To love Him for Himself.

Many of us are like children. Our parents give us toys. They give us little presents, and we're so occupied with the present, with the thing that has been given, we forget the giver. And how many of us are so occupied with some past experience or some great ecstatic utterance or some gift you claim to have or some service you've done or a great revival you had and yet you know so little, so little of Him, so little of Him.

Paul said, "That I might know Him."

Friend, do you really know Him today? I think I've said enough. In some way has it ever gotten a hold of your heart, the wonder, the marvel of knowing the Saviour?

I tell you, my friend, it's a marvelous thing—that you can really, really know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death.

It's a funny thing, you know, that people want the power of God, but not the suffering. They want the power of God without knowing Him in that intimate way. We get occupied with the miraculous and the supernatural and oftentimes, we really miss Him.

What is there in my life, what is there in my yearning that hinders my really knowing Christ?

Some good thing?

Some service?

Now, these are all right; don't misunderstand me. Service, good things, zeal for God—these have their place.

But to know Him—then He becomes the very object of our heart's devotion. And I would suggest today that you and I get into our Bibles and somehow lay hold of the things of Christ.

And, my friend, you'll have a joy, a peace that's beyond the understanding of men.

And God grant this to you today, for His name's sake.

Day 32

Philippians 3:7-11 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We are in the book of Philippians, chapter 3, and dealing with the great passion of the Apostle Paul, his great desire and aim. How this man longed for Christ!

And we've been discussing this in the past two lessons. If I may come down now to verse 10 again.

3:10. That I may know Him, (and this is to know Him experimentally), and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death;

3:11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of (from among) the dead.

We've been discussing how Paul would suffer all things just to win Christ, to be found in Him righteous, and then to know Him. Again I repeat it. This has to do with a life of intimacy with Christ, to really know Him—a life lived with Christ. He had the great desire that every moment of his life was to be occupied with the person of Christ, to glorify Him in everything he said, in everything he did.

His whole motive, the driving force of his life was to magnify the Saviour and to know Him. Just as it was, by the way, in the life of our Lord, when He could say, "I do always the things that please the Father." The great driving force in our Lord's life was the will of His Father, that He might perfect and might complete the purpose for which He came. And so it is with Paul. "I count everything but loss, just to know Him."

Now come back to that verse: "And the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings." You know, Paul must have had a real glimpse of the Saviour when he said this. I know a great many folks have quoted this verse, this 10th verse so much, yet I wonder how much of it we really know. The power of His resurrection. What do we know about that?

Do you remember in Ephesians, chapter 1, verses 18 through 22, where Paul says, "That you might know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all

principalities and powers.” That “mighty power” is the power of His resurrection.

Paul could say in Colossians 1:29, I strive according to the working of Him Who worketh in me mightily—the power of His resurrection.

In 2 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 4, he said, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds”—the power of his resurrection!

In the book of Acts, chapter 4, verse 33, I read, “With great power gave the apostles witness.” What of? Of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—resurrection!

In Romans, chapter 8, verse 11: “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Think of it! You and I already have in us the power of resurrection. It's what Romans 8:11 says. But Paul is praying that we might know it in our experience. The fact is we have the power.

You know, when I first went out preaching the Gospel of Christ, I used to ask the Lord for power. What did I want power for? Power in preaching to reach souls for Christ. My motive was right. I wanted to be so able to preach the Gospel of the grace of God and of the power of God that many, many souls would be saved. But then I began to realize as I grew in the Word of God, it's not a question of asking for more power.

We already have the power of the resurrection in us now. We even have the power of transformation and the power of translation, according to Romans, chapter 8, verse 11. But how much of it do we experience in our day by day living? Oh, that I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection!

As I said a moment ago, we all want that power; we all want to experience it; but, you know, there's something more than that. There's something more than that.

Are you willing to say, I count everything but loss to know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings? I maintain that you will never know the power of His resurrection without knowing something of the fellowship of His sufferings. You take all the saints of God who have experienced the power of God—they've also experienced the sufferings.

In fact, I would say, it's when you come to the place of real suffering that we experience something of His power—maybe not a power that is seen openly so everybody can see it but, oh, that sustaining, wonderful thing where a believer can go through suffering and tests and afflictions and sorrow and still glorify the Saviour.

Brother, this is victory. This is Christianity. This is experiential Christianity—counting everything but loss to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. In 2 Corinthians, chapter 4, Paul takes it up. In Romans, chapter 8, verses 17 and 18, Paul says, “If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together (with Him), for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”

And in 2 Corinthians, chapter 4:17, Paul says that these light afflictions are just for a moment and they are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory and verse 18. You see, once you get your eye on Christ and experience Christ and live with your heart in enjoyment with Christ, sufferings don't mean so much because you're seeing more and more and experiencing more and more of His wonderful presence and joy.

As a pastor for more than 36 years, I've had the joy of being with these people in suffering and sorrow, and some of the things that have amazed me—and I say, it very kindly and bluntly—some of the things that have amazed me would be the fortitude and sweetness and the testimony of His saints in suffering. I've had them tell me, not once, I've been told a number of times by those who have really been in suffering, “I would be glad to go through it all over again if I thought I would have the same experience with Christ.”

Do you remember this fact that when Jesus Christ was in the storm with His disciples and He stilled the storm, they said of Jesus, “What manner of man is this that the very winds and the waves obey Him?” Remember that Jesus never stilled the storm for the crowd, for the multitude. It was only for disciples that He rebuked the waves and the wind. There was a calm. Why? He wanted to encourage them in Himself. He wanted them to know what kind of a Lord they had, and it's in the storms we get to know Him.

It's in the afflictions of life we experience more power than we do when everything is running smoothly.

I wonder, my Christian friend, and I speak to you very bluntly and yet I trust with a heart of compassion and tenderness and love, I wonder how much you, how much I really know the Saviour? What do we know about Him and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His suffering? This is what I'm after; this is what I mean. When Paul caught a glimpse of the Saviour in His glory, in His righteousness, he had a complete reversal of value.

We're back now to verse 6 on through. All that he was trusting in the past was gone. He's got a new glimpse of a Saviour Who not only saves for eternity, but day by day.

You know, a lot of Christians—and I have to say this kind of sadly—there are a great many Christians who can trust their souls to God for eternity, but they can't trust him for the next 24 hours. It is nice to have a Saviour Who can get us to heaven, to forgive our sins, to make us children of God, but what do we know about Him today! This hour? Now?

What do we know about Him in our lives? Do we experience His power? Do we know as much about His sufferings? Do we really know Him?

You know, there's a verse that comes to mind in the book of Daniel, "The people that know their God,"—and this is experimental knowledge—"that know their God shall be strong." Shall be strong.

I wonder if Solomon had this in mind when he said, "The Righteous are as bold as a lion." Yes, but you've seen God.

Elijah could say to King Ahab, "Jehovah before Whom I stand," and "The heavens will be closed at my word." Elisha could say the same thing.

Moses could say the same thing. Who was the great mighty Pharaoh to a man who has been in the presence of God? Oh, may God give us today a real passion for Him, a real hunger for the Saviour.

My friend, my Christian friend, I do not know what your circumstances are. I do not even know where you live. I don't know what church you go to. I'm not concerned about those things. What I am concerned about is what place does Jesus Christ your Saviour have in your life, in your own heart?

Paul could say, I count everything—the good things of life—but loss just to know Him and know the power of His resurrection, to know the fellowship of His suffering, to be made conformable unto His death.

I just pray that today, you and I may experience more than we've ever done before in our lives something of the sweetness and the joy and that glory of this wonderful Saviour, Who gave Himself to redeem us out of all iniquity and to purify unto Himself a people for His possession.

Do you really, really, know Him? I'm not asking you, are you saved? That comes by receiving Him as your Saviour. But do you really know Him in your life?

As Paul could say in Colossians 3:1-4, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek ye the things that are above where Christ sitteth. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, for you have died and your life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory."

Live today in the ecstasy of that for His name's sake.

Day 33

Philippians 3:10-14

Good-day, friends. We've been considering Paul's great desire and aim in verses 7 to 10 of Philippians chapter 3.

How this man Paul longed for Christ Himself! And with your permission, I would like to read again from chapter 3, starting in at verse 10, where Paul writes, "That I may know Him." He has just been saying he counts everything but loss that he might win Christ, that he might know something more about the life that is in Christ and to be found in Christ and His righteousness.

3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of [from among] the dead.

3:12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after [press on], if that I may apprehend [lay hold on] that for which also I am apprehended of [I was laid hold on by] Christ Jesus.

3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended [yet to have laid hold]: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

3:14 I press toward the mark for [goal unto] the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Now we've been discussing this matter of Paul's desire and aim, and I repeat it—how this man really longed for Christ Himself! He had a complete reversal of values on the Damascus road when he saw the Saviour and, hence, he could count everything but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

All the good things that a man counts good, even the religious things, if they come between him and knowing the Saviour, he's going to get rid of them. Experiences, movements, tradition, what have you, anything that would hinder our experiencing Christ, Paul counted loss to win Christ.

Now he's not talking here about being saved, but rather about experiencing Christ in his life, about being satisfied with nothing less than

Christ. He's talking about being found in Him, no longer in filthy rags of self-righteousness but the righteousness of Christ. He's talking about knowing Him in an intimate way, in this 10th verse, to so live with Him that we shall know Him very, very intimately. He wants to know Him and the power of His resurrection—that is, to live in His resurrection power. You remember that in Romans 8:11, we already have the power that raised Christ from the dead—and then the fellowship of His sufferings.

As Paul could say in 2 Corinthians, chapter 4 in the 10th verse and on down to the end of the chapter where he talks about these light afflictions he's suffered for the Gospel's sake, or Romans chapter 8, verse 18, "I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

In other words, Paul counted everything but loss. The great passion of his life was to know Christ, to experience the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering.

Remember in Colossians, he said "to fill up that which is behind with the sufferings of Christ." And writing to Timothy, he could say, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." There is something about a life in Christ that's going to cost you something.

Now I recognize that it costs us nothing to be saved; it cost God everything to save you and me. And, my friend, may I again suggest that, if you want to know what it cost to save you, you look at the cross of Calvary and see the holy, righteous, sinless Son of God dying in *your* place, in *your* stead.

Remember that's how bad you and I were—so bad that Jesus Christ became an accursed thing. I think too often when we try to get people saved, we try to make it so easy that they miss something of the glory of what Christ really paid for their redemption. It's more than just believing on the Saviour in the sense of mental assent to the facts of the cross and of resurrection, but rather, may I remind you, that life comes through a relationship with Him.

There must be a real relationship to the Son of God, and the reason why most people do not accept the Saviour is because they don't believe they need a Saviour. They're as good as anybody else. They've never seen themselves as God sees them and they have never seen the holy, righteous character of God.

And when the Apostle Paul saw the holy, righteous character of God, he would say, "I want to be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness."

Someone says, "Well, suppose I keep all the Law of God and suppose I keep the 10 Commandments and suppose I keep the Golden Rule."

Well, suppose you did? What would you have? That wouldn't give you life. That wouldn't make you righteous. Oh, you would have self-righteousness. You'd have possibly legal righteousness, but you wouldn't have the divine righteousness, the righteousness of Christ. And it's when Paul saw this, the marvels of Christ in His righteousness and His beauty and His glory, he could count everything but loss to know Christ in an intimate way, to really get to know the Saviour in the power of His resurrection, in the fellowship of His suffering.

Most Christians would like to know something of the power of His resurrection but are not very much inclined to want something of the sufferings of Christ.

May I say it again, very bluntly, if you aspire to the power of Christ, you are going to have to have something to do with the sufferings of Christ; for it is in the time of afflictions and tests and trials that we experience the power of God.

He goes in the 10th verse even a little farther. "Being made conformable unto His death." All that we were in the old has been nailed to the cross.

You see, all that you and I were in Adam—we were born in sin, we were unrighteous, we were unholy, and we were looked upon by God as a terrible thing—and this thing that we had, this old sinful nature, and all that we are in our own personalities were so bad, the Father had to say, "The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" What God saw that we were, He crucified it in Christ.

Now this is the book of Romans, chapter 6, where he takes up this question that when Christ died, He died unto sin once; in that he liveth, He liveth unto God. We are to reckon the same thing—that when Christ died, we died. And Paul here says, "I want to be made conformable unto His death. I want to live this new life in Christ. I don't want to live the old life."

It's very hard for us to believe—I mean, actually believe that all that we were in the old was crucified with Christ. But you know, Paul speaks of

this in 2 Corinthians, chapter 5:14 and 15, when he said, “The love of Christ constrains (overmasters) us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” Death has come in, and severed the relationship between the Christian and the old master of sin. Again, the death of Christ has come in and severed the relationship between the Christian and the old race in Adam, which is unto death.

When you tell me that you have eternal life, it means that something has happened to the old life. The old was judged at the cross in Christ. The very death of Christ separates you, emancipates you, severs the relationship between you and all that you were in Adam’s race. We are now new men and new women in Christ. As Paul would say, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, all things are become new.”

We have a new life. That’s why he could say, “We do not know even Christ after the flesh; from now on, we know Him no more.” We’ve been joined to a risen Christ. The old was so bad that God crucified it. God has absolutely no confidence in anybody’s flesh. I say, it was so bad and corrupt, God crucified it in Christ. Now, as a believer in Christ, as a Christian, we have new life. We have a new life. You possibly know that verse in Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death.” Sin pays wages. God executes the penalty.

How are you going to get rid of your wages? You can’t go on strike. You can’t quit the job. You’ve got to receive the wages. Either *you* receive the wages or somebody else does.

Now the wonderful fact is that when Christ came, He bore your sin. Listen, He not only died for your sins, He died for *you*. He took your place. You and I were the ones who should have died. We were the sinners; we were the rebels. Christ died in our place, in our stead.

Paul here says that he wants to experience to the full this new life in Christ, and you remember in Ephesians, chapter 4, that this new man in Christ is created in righteousness and true holiness. True, we are now in the flesh, in bodies that are frail and have lusts and desires; but we don’t need to live in them. Paul wants us to experience this new life in Christ. That’s what he means when he says, “Being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead.”

But we can’t speak of this question of resurrection life unless we believe that we died. The very word “resurrection,” of course, signifies that

death has come in. Resurrection has no meaning unless death has come in, and we died with Christ. We were raised with Christ to walk in newness of life. And now as Christians, joined to a risen Christ, he wants us to experience this identification with the marvelous risen Son of God.

That's why he could say in the preceding verses, "I count everything but loss"—everything but loss, even the good things of life I count but loss if they stand in the way of my experiencing this new life in Christ Jesus.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing today if you and I just sat down and believed this, that God does not see us in any other place than in His Son? But the tragedy is we know so little in our experience, in our day-by-day living, of this new life, this resurrection, this powerful life in Christ.

May God grant we will push to one side anything and everything that will hinder Christ from being manifested in our lives today.

May your heart be occupied with Him today, with the One who is indeed your life.

And the Lord bless.

Day 34

Philippians 3:11-14

Good-day, friends. And we're still in the book of Philippians, chapter 3. We were dealing in our last lesson with verse 10, where the Apostle Paul has been speaking of the passion of his heart that he might be found in Christ, that he might know Christ, that he might win Christ, that he might experience the power of a risen Christ, the fellowship of His suffering, and then to enter into this amazing fact that when Christ died, he died. He wanted to experience the life of the risen Saviour.

Again may I remind you of the fact that this life in Christ, the Christian life, is a supernatural life, and that when you and I accepted the Saviour, we were made new men and women in Christ, so much so that we are in that place where we can experience this wonderful life of Christ.

To realize this, however, we must see that the old was crucified with Christ; that we were so bad that nothing short of the death of Christ could free us from the old master, sin, from the old race in Adam, and from the very law of God which brings a curse.

Again I remind you that the death of Christ severs relationships. We found that in the book of Romans, chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Now Paul wants the experience of this to come to you and me, that we might know Him in such an intimate way that we may experience to the full the resurrection power of Christ and enter into something of the sufferings of Christ. Just as Paul could say in Romans, chapter 9:2-4, "I have continual sorrow. I have unceasing pain in my heart. I could verily wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh who are Israelites."

I want this clearly understood that we can enter somewhat into the very heart of God, even in this question of the work of Calvary.

You know, sometimes I hear people talk about Calvary love, whatever they mean by that. If you only knew what it really meant, my friend, it would mean real suffering—not necessarily physical suffering, but to enter into the heart of God, into what He suffered in making a sacrifice to redeem you and me from sin and from judgment and from death and from all that pertains to the old.

Now Paul, as he saw this, yearned to experience it in his life.

Which brings me now to the 11th verse.

3:11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead.

Now Paul is not teaching that he was trying to merit physical resurrection, when he says this. The Apostle Paul was sure of physical resurrection. You can't read 1 Corinthians 15 without realizing that he believed in resurrection. For example, in verses 51-53 of that chapter—and may I inject here that he wrote Corinthians long before he wrote the book of Philippians—he said, “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

We're all going to be changed. He was sure of that. You take it even in this book, Philippians, chapter 3:20-21 at the end of the chapter, he could say, “Our conversation (manner of life) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body (these bodies of our humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” And one could go on through the Scriptures where the Apostle Paul knew and believed and was sure of physical resurrection.

Then what is he talking about?

I repeat, Paul has a passion for Christ, and he wants the realization of his identification with Christ in a risen life, that the power, the resurrection power of the life of a risen Christ might be a continual reality in his life. In other words, he wants everything in life to be under the control of a risen Saviour.

Resurrection, physical resurrection, is not an attainment; you know that. We are going to be raised from the dead on the ground of what Christ did and what He accomplished at the cross and in resurrection. He has the keys, the authority over death and hell, and did He not say in John, chapter 6, if you believed on Him, you would pass from death to life? In John, chapter 6, four times, He said He would raise up those who believe on Him at the last day.

Resurrection, physical resurrection, is a guaranteed thing. Paul knew that. But what is this attainment? It is his great yearning to experience in his

life the very power of the One Who burst the bonds of the tomb. You remember in Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 19, where Paul prayed, “That we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers.”

Indeed the apostle Paul is so yearning for this that he prayed in chapter 3:17 of Ephesians, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” He prayed that we might know what is the greatness of His power by the indwelling Spirit, that we might be made powerfully strong according to His riches in glory—not according to the Man on the cross, but the Man in resurrection and exaltation on the Throne.

There’s something here that I believe we Christians have never gotten hold of. Oh, it’s true that theologically and doctrinally we believe in the resurrection of Christ, but for some reason it has never gotten hold of us that the life of the risen Christ is yours and mine today, today! That we can experience His life today!

I think this is what Paul is talking about—the realization of his identification, the actual experience of a union with the risen exalted Son of God.

My, what a change it would make in our lives day-by-day—in your tests, your trials, your problems, whatever you may go through, your sorrows.

Sometimes you say, “Well, Mr. Mitchell, I don’t know where to go to from here. I don’t know what I can do next. I don’t know which way to turn.”

Why, turn to Him. He’s got the answer. You take our present generation here. We’re turning to everything. We’re trying everything. We’re trying philosophies of men. We’re trying the scientific realizations of men. We’re trying anything and everything but, but the risen Son of God. Even in our church work, even in evangelical circles, we’re trusting anything and everything but Him.

Now listen. Paul here has a passion for the Son of God, and the one thing he really yearns for, starting in verse 6 and following through—he counts everything but loss that he might know Him “for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” He put aside everything for one

fact, that he might experience the risen Son of God. “That I might attain unto this risen life” that is in Christ in my day-by-day experience.

I say again, don't misunderstand me, the Apostle Paul very well knew that physical resurrection was not an attainment. That's part of our salvation. Paul wrote, for example, in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5:23, 24, when he said, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

You see, Paul knew this. He was the one who revealed this by the Spirit of God to His people. Hence, I say, in this passage, he wants to bring everything under the Spirit's control. Take, for example, the passage which comes to mind, in Colossians, chapter 3. Do you remember that passage in Colossians 3, the first 4 verses when Paul says, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

Now here's the confidence of appearing with Him in glory. Here's the confidence of resurrection. Here is his appeal, “If you then be risen with Christ, having died in Christ, now you're raised with Christ, what shall I do?” Seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. In other words, the life we have is the life of Christ, the life of a risen Christ.

Paul here is yearning for the fact that the life of the risen Christ might be ours, really ours, in our own heart and in our own life.

My Christian friend, let me ask you some questions.

How much of Christ do you really know in your life?

How much of Christ do you really know, concerning the power of His resurrection?

How much do you know of the wonderful, supernatural life in the Saviour?

I'm not asking you what your doctrine is. I'm not asking you what church you belong to. That's neither here nor there.

The great thing that I'm concerned about is—do you really know the Saviour? And if you've accepted Him into your life as your Saviour and

Lord, how much of His power, His blessing, of His fragrance do you know? This is the desire of Paul.

“I’m willing,” says Paul, “to put everything out of my life that would in anywise hinder my experiencing this life in Christ.”

Can you say that?

Now I’ve been spending time on this. I feel I’m touching one of the most needful things among God’s people today. What we hold as a doctrine, the early church held as a reality in their lives. These dear apostles, you couldn’t fool them on this one question. Their Saviour lived! And they became men of God, men of courage. They could defy the nations of the earth. They could be torn to pieces by tigers and lions and wild beasts. They knew they were joined to a risen, glorified Saviour; and they went out into eternity rejoicing in One Who was indeed their life.

There may come a time soon when we will be called upon to take such a stand for Christ.

Death was a conquered foe. The world was a conquered enemy. And no wonder the Word of God says, “The people that know their God shall be strong.”

God grant you and I will know our Saviour in a very, very intimate and precious way and will revel in Him today, because He loves you with an everlasting love.

He’s more willing to make these things real to you than you are to have them made real to you.

And the Lord bless you for His name’s sake.

Day 35

Philippians 3:12-14

Good-day, friends. The great desire of my heart is that you will really know the Lord Jesus in a very wonderful, precious way. You know, we are living in a day when so many Christians, professing Christians, know so little of their Saviour. They've never for some reason or other entered into the marvelous liberty that is in Christ. I don't mean license. I mean the liberty of coming into the presence of God, of knowing something of a life of intimacy with God Himself.

And here in the book of Philippians, chapter 3, we've been dealing with the great passion of the Apostle Paul, this man who had been trained in all the Gentile culture and Jewish culture of his day, a brilliant man, and yet a humble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when Jesus Christ came into this man's life, he was absolutely transformed from a persecutor into an apostle of Jesus Christ, from a blasphemer into an evangel of the Saviour.

Think of it!

I am amazed at the power of God in people's lives. But the tragedy is that so few of us have been transformed, not because God doesn't want to do it or can't do it, but because we're not making ourselves available to Him to do what He wants to do with us.

When I now read of the passion of this man in the chapter, I can only say that Paul was a specialist for Christ. In verse 13, he writes,

3:13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

3:14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

He was a man who had a passion, a devotion, a man who was entirely sold out to the Saviour, a real bond-slave for God.

The great yearning of his heart was to experience all that he had in Christ. And you know, it's going to take all eternity for us to really appreciate and experience all that we have in the Saviour. Oh, we're so slow to learn. We're so slow to learn.

But it would delight the heart of God, if we would walk in fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ, and experience His presence, His power, His love, His compassion, His tenderness, whatever you may need to live down here.

Now Paul has been talking about the fact that he had thrown everything overboard just to know Christ in a wonderful way. He wanted to attain all that his identification with the risen Son of God could bring him.

So in verse 12 he says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” That will never be until we see Him face to face, “but I follow after” if that I may apprehend, may lay hold of, may experience all that Jesus Christ has laid hold of for me. Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold of—or experienced all that I have in Christ—but this one thing I do—I’m going to forget the past, ignore the present and reach forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul here is declaring that the Lord had laid hold of him for something. And by the way, when you accepted the Saviour, He laid hold of you for something, too. If you haven’t experienced all that He has for you, He wants your heart to desire and to yearn for that.

Now, if I might suggest two or three things here. He knew that he was going to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. You find this, of course, in Romans 8:29, that God has determined that we shall be conformed to His image. Paul had not experienced that yet, but he yearned in his own heart that he might experience this transforming power where he would be just like his Saviour.

You remember, Paul speaks of this in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.” We are being changed from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. The process of transformation is taking place now. In fact, it started the moment we accepted the Saviour. And believe me, my friend, in Philippians 1:6, Paul said, “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform (perfect) it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

The end is guaranteed. God has determined that you will be conformed to His image. Paul says here, “I haven’t laid hold of that yet. I haven’t fully experienced that yet.” I say, he won’t, nor will you, nor will I

until we see Him face to face. But he yearned for this—to be just like his Saviour.

And, secondly, he was yearning to be where Christ was, for this is the hope of the believer. Jesus said, “Where I am, there you may be also.” These were some of the last words of our Saviour in John 14:1-6, when He said, “Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

You see, Paul knew this, but he was still on earth; and he yearned to be with His Saviour. We had that in the first chapter in verse 23, when he said, “I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”

Now the third thing, Paul knew that the Lord had laid hold of him so that he might be glorified with his Saviour.

“Do you mean to tell me,” someone says, “that Christians are going to be glorified with the Saviour?”

Well, of course, you know, in John, chapter 17, verse 22, Jesus said, “The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them.” In verse 24 of the same chapter, Jesus said, Father, I want something; that everyone that You’ve given to Me might “be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory.”

It’s what Paul yearned for. It’s one of his passions, that he might see Christ in His glory. He hasn’t experienced that yet. He could say, for example, in 2 Corinthians 4:17, that these light afflictions are just “for a moment,” but they’re working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

You read in Romans 8:18, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Or that verse in Colossians 3:4 “when Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”

Now Paul hadn’t experienced that yet, but he wanted to lay hold of it. He wanted to experience the yearning of his heart. He wanted to lay hold of everything that Christ had laid hold of for him.

I tell you it's a wonderful thing that when you and I accepted the Saviour, the Lord already had a real purpose in saving us. Yes, we're going to be conformed to His image. We're going to be exactly where He is. We're going to be glorified together with Him.

I'm not through yet.

And the fourth thing I think is the important one of the four, and that is, he was going to experience eternal unbroken fellowship with the Saviour face to face.

Now none of us has ever had that experience. I don't believe that the Apostle Paul had either, and if any man had a passion for Christ and wanted to live for Christ and was Spirit-filled, it was the Apostle Paul. But I'm sure there were times in his life when he was discouraged and disheartened. I'm sure there were times in his life when he was out of fellowship with the Lord. That could be true because he writes so clearly about that problem.

Oh, for that day when we shall be in unbroken, eternal fellowship with the Saviour face to face. My, what a prospect! And Paul here says, "Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect, but I lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me."

Why do you think Christ saved you? To get you to heaven? That's just a mere incident.

What did He really save you for? For the glory of God, yes, and that you and I would not only share in His glory, but spend eternity in unbroken, eternal, wonderful fellowship with the Saviour face to face.

My, what a prospect!

What a prospect!

What a prospect!

Do you know, the tragedy is, too many Christians have so little fellowship with Christ now. For some reason or other, we've allowed so much to come into our lives that we've robbed ourselves of fellowship with the Saviour; and the great yearning of His heart is your fellowship. That's why He made you. That's why He saved you. Not just to get you to heaven. Not just to give you eternal life. Not just to pronounce you righteous and forgive every sin. Wonderful as that is.

But God wants to have a people with Himself who are just like Christ so that through eternity *He* can have unbroken, eternal fellowship with us and that we can enjoy *Him* for eternity face to face.

Friends, what a passion!

You know what's the matter with us? We've never really had a vision of Christ in all His beauty and all His glory. We've never seen the great yearning of His heart. We're so occupied with what we want that we miss what He wants.

Now let's be specialists for Christ. And today, even today, whatever the past may have been with all its accomplishments and all its failures, supposing today we start to walk with Christ.

If your fellowship is broken, confess your sin to Him.

Be real about it.

He's promised to forgive you and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Now go on and enjoy your Saviour.

Enjoy Him today.

And the Lord bless you for His name's sake.

Day 36

Philippians 3:13-14

Good-day, friends. We were discussing in our last lesson, verses 11 down through verse 13, taking up the great yearning of Paul's heart when he said, "I am not perfect," or as he puts it here, "not as though I have already attained either were already perfect, but I follow after (chase after) if I might experience, if I might lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me."

We were making the statement in our last lesson that I think there are four things involved in this that Paul never fully experienced, but the passion of his heart was that he might experience them.

And now you're going to say to me, "But, Mr. Mitchell, we're never going to experience those things until we see the Lord face to face."

There's a certain measure of truth in that. But may I remind you that we grow day by day in maturity. We grow from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord, as you find in 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 18, which speaks of the fact that "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are (being) changed into the same image from glory to glory" and that these light afflictions are working for us a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

What Paul here is after is that we might experience all that we have in Christ, that we've been joined to the risen, glorified Son of God. I wish that in some way I could put into words the way I feel about this and which I think is the heart of Paul—this passion for the Saviour—to really know the Saviour.

When a man could say, "I count everything but loss just to know Him," that's experimental knowledge—a day-by-day, hour-by-hour experience of the presence of the Living God.

This is a rare thing today. It shouldn't be. Every believer should have this passion. And God has left us down here that we might yearn after Him and experience His power and the fellowship of Christ's suffering and the intimacy of His fellowship. And when Paul caught a glimpse of why Christ had laid hold of him and why He laid hold of you and me, he was beside himself, as he said in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 13, "If we be beside ourselves, it's to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause."

Oh, this amazing fact of the purpose of God in Christ for His people!

Allow me to mention again the four things I mentioned in our last lesson. The first is that Paul believed God had laid hold of him for the purpose of changing him and conforming him to the image of Jesus Christ, that God is not going to be through with His people—He's not going to be through with you—until you're just like Jesus, conformed to His image, transformed, transfigured into the image of the Son of God.

I wish in some way I could make you see this. Even the very tests of life, the very afflictions of life, the sufferings of life, the sorrows of life are part of God's purpose in taking His people and making them yearn for glory, to be just like the Lord Jesus. And this process of transformation is going on now. He started that when you accepted the Saviour, and He'll not finish it until you stand before Him looking just like Jesus Christ.

And then the second thing I said was, He saved us to be where He is. I think most believers believe this and see this because you find this in John, chapter 14, the first four verses, where Jesus said, "Where I am, there you may be also." The wonderful fact that wherever Jesus Christ is—He's at the right hand of authority, He's the One Who upholds the whole universe by the word of His power—wherever He is, we're going to be with Him and enjoy Him.

And the third thing was, we're going to be glorified together with Him. This is beyond all human comprehension to know that you and I who were born in sin, shapen in iniquity are going to look just like the Son of God. We are going to be glorified together with Him.

People say, "Well, if I can just get to heaven."

My friend, is that the only vision you have, just getting to heaven? Is that your only desire, just getting to heaven? That's only a change of location. We're going to be glorified together with Him, and the very angels of God, the holy angels, are going to be the ministers, the servants of the children of God. I love that verse, the last verse of the first chapter of Hebrews, when He speaks of holy angels, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be the heirs of salvation?"

Oh, Christian friend, lay hold of what you have in Christ and then rejoice for the blessed hope that you're going to be glorified together with Him. He said this. He's given His word on this. "For the glory which Thou

hast given Me,” said Jesus, “I have given them. And I want them, Father, to behold my moral glory.”

And then that last thing, the fourth thing, was the marvelous thing of spending eternity in unbroken, wonderful, blessed fellowship with the Saviour face to face.

I'm repeating what I said in the last lesson, and I don't mind repeating it. I want this to get into your heart and mind. It's wonderful to have fellowship with God now; but, oh, it happens so rarely with most of God's people.

Let me ask you a very blunt question.

Christian friend, when were you last in the presence of the Saviour? I mean when you got down to business with the Lord, when you really enjoyed Him for yourself. Oh, I know we all come with our requests: The baby is sick or the business is no good or you're not feeling too well yourself or some friend has died or whatever the test may be. All your children are having problems, and you run to the Lord—and rightly so, too. He wants you to do that—we don't do it often enough—but do you ever take the time just to come down into the presence of the Lord just for Himself, just to have a time of fellowship with Him, of praising Him, worshiping Him and being occupied with Him?

You say, “Mr. Mitchell, when I get down to pray, I can say all I'm going to say in about three minutes. Unless I've got some great request, I can say all I have to say in three or four minutes. And that seems to be awfully long!”

Didn't you ever learn to wait on the Lord, just to take your Bible and let the Lord reveal Himself to you through the Word of God? I was thinking of Isaiah 9:6, “He shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

Did you ever stop to think of each of those words and to thank Him? That He's the One “altogether lovely”? Have you ever sat down in the presence of His Father and read the 17th chapter of John, for example, and see the heart of the Lord occupied for you? He said, “I pray not for the world. I pray for those whom You've given to Me out of the world. They were Yours and You've given them to Me.”

Get occupied with the Saviour. Friend, you're going to spend eternity with Him if you've taken Him as your own Saviour.

And one of the marvelous things that Paul here is saying, “I just yearn, I count everything but loss.” What for? For this intimacy of fellowship, the experience of His power, the wonder of His presence.

And then to think that we’re going to have unbroken eternal fellowship with the Son of God. No wonder when I come to this verse, verse 13, “Brethren, I count not myself to have experienced (all that I have in Christ): but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling (the upward call) of God in Christ Jesus.” One thing I do. I’m not going to be occupied with my accomplishments, and I’m certainly not going to be occupied, says Paul, with my failures.

I’m not going to be occupied with the past or the present. I’m going to stretch out. And this is the word of a man reaching out with all that is in him. “I stretch toward the mark for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

If I may add a verse—in Hebrews, chapter 12:1-2, you remember when the writer of Hebrews says, “Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with (being surrounded by) so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus (gazing intently upon Jesus) the Author and Finisher (Perfecter) of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.”

What was the joy set before Him? The accomplishing of a work that would bring you and me into eternal unbroken fellowship with God Almighty for all eternity, and that we would be just like His Son.

Oh, I say, no wonder Paul says, “one thing I do.” He was a specialist for Christ. Won’t you pray that God will raise up in these days, specialists for Christ? Men and women who shall live Christ, who shall be found in Christ, where He will be the object of their affection and devotion.

Oh, listen, Christian friend, what place have you given Christ in your life?

Can you say, “this one thing I do”—whatever else happens in life, “this one thing I do.”—I’m going to be occupied continually with my Saviour? I want to know my God; I want to know my Saviour; I want to really know Him in every department of my life, so that I can revel in His

fellowship, that I can experience His power, and then become so available to God that I shall be a channel of blessing to my generation, to my neighbors, to my friends, to my family.

Oh, the resources we have in Him!

May God open your eyes and my eyes to the beauties and glories of Christ Jesus, whose we are, whom we serve. Remember, He bought you for Himself. Why not thank Him?

Revel in Him today, and the Lord bless you for His name's sake.

Day 37

Philippians 3:13-19

Good-day, friends. We know so little of Christ Himself. Oh, we read our Bibles and we can possibly talk about the doctrine of Christ and what He has accomplished for us; but I'm dealing here in chapter 3 of Philippians with the reality of a man who had a real passion for Christ Himself. Nothing else mattered—the past or present or the future. He had only one great passion—Christ.

That's what he said here in Philippians 3, verse 13,

3:13. One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

3:14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The great yearning of his heart is Christ. Now I'm going to start from here, but before I do, I'm going to ask you a question. Are you watching the spectators or the goal? Or are you occupied with your starting point in Christianity?

There are a great many Christians who hang around the cross. Now I believe that Christ died and did a perfect work on the cross, but He's no longer on the cross for the Christian. He's on the throne for you, my brother, if you love the Saviour. And if we hang around the cross, we'll miss something of the glory of the Man at God's right hand. It's the One in the glory that we have fellowship with. He's the One for Whom we look. He's the One who can fill and flood your heart with joy and peace and love and compassion and all that you need.

Now I want to start today on verses 15 through 19. Paul has been talking about his great passion and aim and goal, and now he takes up a brief exhortation. If I may read those verses 15-19. Now mark the great exhortation of Paul here. And the first verses, 15, 16 and 17 are practical, when he said,

3:15. Let us therefore, as many (of you) as be perfect (full-grown or mature), be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded (if you want to know any thing else), God shall reveal even this unto you.

If there are some things you do not know about the wonders of Christ and your relationship and fellowship with Him, God will be very happy to reveal them to you. The great thing I'm after here, and I think that Paul is after, is that his readers go on in their great yearning for Christ Himself, to experience all that for which Christ has laid hold of them.

3:16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained (even though you've already gone so far), let us walk by the same rule (keep on going), let us mind the same thing.

Keep Christ pre-eminent. We mustn't depend on past experiences. Let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing. Keep on going. You see, there are a lot of believers who have had past experiences, a lot of Christians who revel in what they had one year ago, 5 years ago, 10 years ago, some of them go back 20, 40 years ago.

Well, that's wonderful, but where are you *now*? That's what Paul is talking about. Whereunto you have attained, keep on going. Keep on making Christ Lord and Master of your life. Keep on yearning for the things of Christ. Keep on walking with Him. Keep on growing.

That's what Peter says, in 2 Peter, chapter 3:18, "We are to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." There's got to be continual growth. You can't stand still, and it's folly for us to depend upon experiences. They come and they go. They're passing things.

Christ is eternal and goes on forever. He's the One Who can satisfy your heart under any circumstance at any time. I care not what your condition is. So whatever you've done, keep on going. Don't fold your oars and sit down. Keep on going. You see, this will keep you in the path that God wants you to walk, where Christ will be experienced continually in your life. Let us mind the same thing.

3:17. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example.

He wants us to walk in the same path and follow him, Paul, as an example. He counted all things loss for Christ. He made Christ the supreme passion of his life, and that's what we should do.

"There are others," says Paul, "who walk just the way we walked. Now you follow their example. You follow suit. Just keep on going. Maintain that walk where Christ is the center of attraction."

And I say, you follow Paul as he followed Christ. Christ was the supreme passion of his life. I can't help but keep saying this, because today I see God's people having other things in their life that have taken precedence over Christ. It may be business. It may be money. It may be homes. It may be fashion. It may be sports. It may be anything under heaven. Christ is squeezed out of your life. He doesn't have the place He ought to have. Paul says, "You follow me. I have counted everything but loss just for Christ." The supreme passion of his life was Christ. He wants you to follow suit.

And then in verse 18 and 19, he warns us about certain ones we must shun. If I make Christ the center of my affection and devotion, then I've got to watch out for somebody who would detract me from Christ. So he said,

3:18. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

3:19. Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things).

Look out for those who are so occupied with the things of the flesh and the things of the world that they would gather round you and detract you from Christ, and theirs is sure destruction. And I'm sure I can say this very frankly that we're living in a day when religious people, religious leaders try to blur the vision of God's people concerning Christ. As they preach earthly things, they water down the Word of God. They get your eyes off Christ and the things you have in Christ. They want you occupied with their little psychological secrets of how to have a fulfilled life and how to be a success. They want to be somebody. They want your devotion. They want your praise. They want your money.

Look out for them, Paul says. And I tell you even with weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

You be careful, if I may give a word of warning here. Be careful of any doctrine, of any teaching, or of any group that does not make Jesus Christ the center not only their faith but of their affections and devotion. You watch any doctrine that does not make Christ the center. I know I'm treading on possibly dangerous ground with some people when I say this, but I declare to you that one of the reasons why so many hundreds of God's people have fallen away is because other things have come in, other persons and personalities have come in, and the result is that Christ has been pushed out of their life.

Oh, yes, they go to church Sunday morning. That's about all; that's about it. And if they don't like the preacher, then they don't go anywhere. The Word of God is neglected, and people have come in who are under the destruction of God, who are opposed to God, who are the enemies of the cross of Christ. They glory in their shame. They mind earthly things. These are the people we're warned about by the Spirit of God because these are the ones who keep you from making Christ pre-eminent.

Now it's very obvious. Just you sit down and ask yourself the question: why isn't Christ pre-eminent in my life? Why isn't He first in my affection and my devotion? Why don't I give more time to the Saviour? Why don't I spend more time in His Word? Why don't I spend more time in His fellowship? Why? Why am I just satisfied with going to church once a week, if I feel like it? Or, but I go to Sunday school, too.

Yes, all right, you go to Sunday school and you go to the morning meeting, and then what? You don't think about the Saviour very much until the next Sunday. And you're missing the riches of the glory of His grace. You're missing the wonders of a fellowship with the eternal Son of God. You're missing the revelation of His love, His compassion, His tenderness and His devotion to you. You're missing the experience of His power, of His suffering. You're missing being a channel of blessing to some other heart.

My friend, did you ever stop to think about it? And Paul says, now, in these verses, verses 15 through 17: he exhorts us to walk by the truths of Christ pre-eminent. He wants us not to depend upon past experiences, but to press on, to maintain that walk where Christ is the very center of our life. And then we are to shun those who would detract us from the Saviour.

Oh, I plead with you today, my dear Christian friend, to examine your heart in the light of His presence and the light of His word. And may you enjoy and glory today in the fullness of Christ, in the riches of His grace, in the riches of His glory, in the riches of His love, and may you be one of those who know God intimately.

And the Lord bless you for His name's sake.

Day 38

Philippians 3:20-21

Good-day, friends. We're coming now to the end of the chapter, and we've come to this wonderful truth given to us by the Apostle Paul in verses 20 and 21. I'm going to read it and then in closing up this chapter, tell you one or two little things that are on my heart. Where Paul says,

3:20. For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

3:21. Who shall change our vile body (or our body of humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Now here comes the encouragement. He's just been informing us that God wants us to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that our lives will be a benediction, that those of us who claim to be mature keep on going in the path in which we are walking. We are not to stop nor to be occupied with experiences or with movements or with organizations. He wants our life to be controlled by the person of Christ Himself. He wants us to have a passion for the Saviour, and Paul even goes so far as to say, "Follow me as your example, and my example is that Christ may be pre-eminent in all that I am and all that I do."

And then he warns us about those who make a profession of salvation, but are not real believers. "They are the enemies of the cross of Christ, and their end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

And then he encourages us when he speaks of the fact that the coming of the Lord is near: "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour." Our hope is the coming of this One Who is the object of our love and affection; and because of the time element, because the time is short, we are not to waste our time on things that are passing nor on the flesh. Rather we are to be occupied with the Saviour, "For he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," says the writer of Hebrews (10:37).

Now let's look at these two verses for a moment. Our citizenship is in heaven.

Where's yours, my friend?

You see, we don't belong here; we don't belong here. We are legally citizens of heaven. Did you know that God is going to populate heaven with redeemed sinners? Did you know that? That heaven is going to be peopled with redeemed men and women whom He purchased for Himself with His own blood? God's going to have a people in heaven and the angels of God are going to be their servants, and they're going to share with Christ in His glory.

"Our citizenship," says Paul, "is in heaven."

Don't you forget that!

Somebody's going to say, "Well, if your citizenship is in heaven, if you're a legal citizen of heaven, adopted and born into the family of God, if you're a child of one who is God, what in the world are you doing down here on earth?"

Well, my friend, we're just here on business. Yes, we're just here on business. Paul could say in 2 Corinthians 5:20 "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

You see, an ambassador is never on duty except if he's away from home. You know that. We send ambassadors to other countries. They're in foreign lands. They're in strange lands. Their citizenship is here in America, but they may go to Germany, they may go to France, they may go to England, they may go to Taiwan, they may go to Japan, they may go to South America, they may go anywhere. And when they serve, they're serving away from home.

Now our home is in heaven. Our citizenship is in heaven. We belong to heaven. We belong where God is, where the Lord Jesus is. Our citizenship, says Paul, is in heaven.

I tell you it's a wonderful thing to belong there. Did you ever stop to think, Christian friend, did you ever stop to think that the Lord Jesus has been nearly 2,000 years in glory after He left here? And He's preparing a place for us, His people.

It's one of the last words He said to His disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am, there ye may be also."

Oh, I tell you, it's a wonderful thing to know that! Our citizenship, where? It's in heaven. That's what Jesus meant in John 17, when He said, "Father, these who believe on me, they don't belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. They're in the world, but they're not of the world."

Well, where do we belong?

We belong to the glory.

We belong to heaven. We're members of God's family, and one of these days, we're going home.

One of these days, the Lord's going to come and take all of His people home, as it says in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4.

Wonderful thing this!

"If I go and prepare a place for you," He said in John 14, "I will come again, and I will receive you unto Myself that where I am, there you may be also."

I think it's a wonderful thing to have a hope like this.

Our citizenship is in heaven.

Say, did you ever go to a foreign country; and, when you get off the plane or off the ship and you walk down the street, you find they dress differently from you. They look different from you, and they act different, and they think different and you feel like a stranger.

Yes. Remember that song:

I am a stranger here within a foreign land.
My home is far away beyond a golden strand.
Ambassadors to be
On realms beyond the sea,
I'm here on business for my King.

I say again, our citizenship is in heaven, and what are we doing down here? Bearing testimony for Christ. Witnessing to men and women of the Saviour. Encouraging believers to be established in Christ and in the faith.

What are you doing, my friend, down here? You see, if God was through with you, you wouldn't be here. And if you say to me, "Mr. Mitchell, I don't have any gifts. I don't know what God can do with me or do through me."

Well, maybe you haven't made yourself available to God. The very fact, my Christian friend, that you are on the earth means that God has got a purpose for your being here.

Did you ever try to find out what that purpose is?

Do you know you're an ambassador for the son of God?

If I were to change the wording, I would say, "Do you know that you are down here representing the Saviour?" That's why He left you here.

"If I were a missionary. . . ."

Well, you are a missionary right where you are, right where you are. Oh, you don't have to go to Africa to be a missionary. You don't have to go to Southeast Asia to be a missionary.

Right where you live, right where you work, right where you work in your own home, in the office, in the factory, on the street, wherever you go, do people know you belong to the Saviour?

Do people know that your destination is heaven?

Do people know that you are a child of One Who is God?

Do people see in you something of the wonders of our Lord and our Saviour?

Have you made yourself available to God to be a channel for Him to use.

Friend, our citizenship is in heaven; and we're down here on earth on business for our King. Business for our Lord.

Are we attending to business?

Are we doing the job God wants us to do?

You see, I'm talking to you personally, wherever you are, whatever time it is. God wants you to be available, so the Spirit of God Who indwells you can find you useable. And isn't it wonderful? I say, is it not wonderful that He's left us here on earth to be a benediction, to be a channel of blessing to somebody—maybe even to someone in your own home? And you can be that today.

Why not give yourself to Him?

Just say, Lord Jesus, I want to be available to you, to be a blessing to some heart, a blessing to some life just today.

I haven't been much of a blessing before; but, Lord, today, I want you to take over and make me a blessing to some heart.

And the Lord wonderfully, wonderfully and richly bless you for His name's sake.

Day 39

Philippians 3:20-21 (continued)

Good-day, friends. And here we are again in Philippians, chapter 3, with the great encouragement that the Lord gives to us by His Spirit through the Apostle Paul. We are in the last two verses of Philippians 3, and I'm going to read them again—and by the way, I've been going very slowly through this chapter. Oh, how I have yearned, how I have longed that in some way the truth of this chapter may tug at your heart.

Now we have the encouragement at the end of the chapter, and the encouragement is the coming of the Lord, whom we love:

3:20. For our conversation (citizenship or commonwealth) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

3:21. Who shall change our vile body (fashion anew the body of our humiliation), that it may be fashioned like (conformed) unto his glorious body (the body of his glory), according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

We were discussing in our last lesson this matter of the coming of the Lord and especially that we are citizens of heaven and belong to glory. We belong to heaven. And Jesus said that where He is, that's where we're going to be. God is going to have a people in heaven, and we are citizens—legal citizens—of glory.

This is an astounding thing, and I hope it is an astounding thing to you—how God can take those who are in utter ruin and transform them into the children of God and make them just like His Son. Then He sends us back here on earth to be His witnesses, to be His ambassadors. You remember, Jesus said in John 17:18, Father, “as Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

We've been sent back into the world as ambassadors for Christ, representatives of the living God. Again may I remind you that all the power

of an infinite God is behind you, that the message He has given to us is very clear and very simple. The message of the Gospel to men and women is that Christ died to save sinners and guaranteed that salvation by the fact that He was raised again from the dead by the glory of the Father and was exalted to God's right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. He's left us down here to carry on the good news and to tell people. It's His message; and may I say, as ambassadors, as His representatives, we have absolutely no right to change the message which He has given to us.

If you don't like the message, if you don't believe the message, then, my friend, don't you try to be a representative of the Lord. If you are going to change His message, that makes you a false representative, a false ambassador. We are ambassadors, representatives, beseeching men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. Our citizenship is in heaven, and we're down here on business for the Saviour. But we're looking for Somebody, and we read here in the verse, "From whence also (from heaven) we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

We're not looking for the coming of a spirit. We're not looking for the coming of death. We're looking for the coming of a Person who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. We're looking for a Person.

Friend, are you looking for a Person or are you looking for an experience? Do you want the Lord to come to take you out of your troubles?

Do you want the Lord to come because you're in a jam?

Or do you want Him to come because you love Him?

Paul says, "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." I tell you it's a wonderful thing. The One Who is the Saviour is coming again.

What's He coming for? To complete the job of salvation. Did you ever think of it? You see, we have been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin. We are now being saved from the power of sin through our union with the risen Christ. He is yet to come and deliver us from the very presence of sin, and that's what we're looking for. We look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. This is our expectation.

You remember in I Corinthians 1:7, the Corinthian church, a carnal church, a church that was really out of fellowship with God, and yet they were "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And the

Thessalonians were waiting for God's "Son from heaven" (1 Thessalonians 1:10), the one who had been "raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

Are you waiting for the coming of the Lord? That's what you have in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4:13—we do not sorrow as others who have no hope. We're looking for the coming of a Saviour, "for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

I tell you, it's a wonderful thing. As a pastor, I've had the wonderful joy of being with many Christians as they are going Home.

I've even had some of these dear old saints say to me, "Mr. Mitchell, please don't pray for me to stay here. I want to go Home. I want to go Home."

I remember a friend of mine in the ministry, who went to see his mother who was very, very, very ill. In fact, they didn't expect her to live, and he was talking about going Home. Now her sister, this man's auntie, didn't have this hope, didn't have this hope.

So one day the auntie said to him, "I wish you'd talk to your mother and have her stop talking about wanting to go Home, wanting to go Home. Why doesn't she fight to live?"

And this dear boy said to his auntie, "Auntie, dear, you know mother has a Home to which she—can—go."

I tell you that's a wonderful thing. Do you have a Home to which you can go? Do you have a Home to which you can go? I say, isn't it wonderful that you and I, if you love the Saviour, are guaranteed Home, Home with Him, as we sing sometimes, "Home, sweet Home, nevermore to roam." To be with the Saviour, to see Him face to face, to enjoy unbroken, eternal, continual fellowship with Him!

You see, we're waiting for the coming of a Saviour. We're not looking for an event. We're not looking for some great movement. We're not looking for death. We're looking for a Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. We're in love with a Person!

You know, I just love to go down to the airport and often times when I'm traveling, which I do quite often, I get on a plane or I'm getting off a

plane. You see people getting off the plane and their friends meet them. It's a kind of an empty feeling when I get off a plane. Everybody's being met by someone who loves them. They kiss, they embrace, they shake hands, they're thankful to see each other; and you get off the plane and there's nobody to meet you and pick you up there. You go and get your baggage and you get a taxi and you go to some hotel.

My, I tell you, it's an empty feeling; and, if you're expecting somebody and they're not there, you wonder if they've missed the car or if they've missed the time. And my, what a relief when all of a sudden, you see them.

Do you ever stop to think that we're going to go Home one of these days, and who do you think is going to welcome us? The Lord Jesus Christ. We're looking for the Saviour. We're looking for a Person. We're looking for the One who redeemed us.

Friend, have you got that hope today? Do you have that hope, that expectation? No wonder when you come to the last chapter of the Bible, chapter 22 of Revelation, the Lord Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly."

John responded and said, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

And in Hebrews 10:37, "He that shall come, will come and will not tarry." And Jesus said, "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself."

My friend, listen, that may happen today. I've got no right to say it's not today. There's nothing that I know of in the Scriptures that can prevent or hinder the Son of God's coming today for His own.

Acts chapter 15 says, that He is gathering out a people for His name, called the church; and when that job is completed, when the church of Christ is completed with redeemed men and women, He's going to call that church Home.

I said, a while ago, we're here on business for the King, for our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Our legal citizenship is in heaven. We're down here on business, and one of these days, He's going to say, "Come on. Come on Home and report."

We're going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. We're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, all believers, to receive the things done in the body, whether good or bad. He's going to crown us. He's

going to rejoice in us and we're going to rejoice in Him and see that we'll be like Him.

My friend, are you ready today for the coming of the Lord? Are you? Is this your anticipation? As Peter said, in 1 Peter, chapter 1, "Whom having not seen, we love, and yet though we see Him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of souls."

It's a good place to stop today. I'm going to leave that with you.

Are you living today in anticipation of the coming of the Saviour or are you occupied with mundane, passing, corrupt things?

What's your plan today?

Somebody said to Mr. Wesley one day, "What would you do if you knew that Jesus was coming today?"

He said, "I would be doing just what I'm doing, because I'm living daily in expectation of the coming of the Lord."

Friend, if the Lord Jesus Christ would come today, would you change your plans? Would you change your plans, if you knew the Lord was coming today?

He might come today, and I plead with your heart, Christian friend, that when He comes, you'll be in fellowship with Him.

Let us not be numbered among those whose tears have to be wiped away, but be with those who are rejoicing in the fellowship, those who are waiting for their Lord from heaven, the One Who has delivered us from the coming wrath.

And the Lord wonderfully, richly, marvelously bless you today, and remember, everyone who hath this hope set on Him purifieth Himself even as He is pure.

And live today in anticipation of seeing Him, our Saviour and our Lord.

Day 40

Philippians 3:20-21 (continued)

Good-day, friends. Now we are still in Philippians chapter 3, and we're down at the last verse. I'm going to read the last two verses again of Philippians chapter 3. We just want to reach your heart for the Lord.

You say, "Well, Mr. Mitchell, I don't understand all that you say."

That may be true, but if I can get hold of your heart for Him, I'd be greatly satisfied. It would rejoice my heart to know that in some way you've been brought into a closer relationship and fellowship with your Saviour and to be filled with that joy and that peace and that satisfaction of belonging to Him.

Now let's consider these last two verses of Philippians, 3, where the apostle says,

3:20. For our conversation (citizenship or commonwealth) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

3:21. Who shall change your vile body (fashion anew the body of our humiliation), that it may be fashioned like (conformed) unto his glorious body (the body of his glory), according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Now we have been dealing in our past lessons with the fact that our citizenship is in heaven, that God is going to people heaven with redeemed sinners, those who are His children, and that those on earth are waiting for the coming of the Lord. We're not waiting for some experience. We're not waiting for some great thing to happen, for some movement to take place. We're waiting for a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. And our present attitude is to be one of expectancy, just like the Thessalonian church, who waited for His Son from heaven, the One Who burst the bonds of the tomb, the One Who had redeemed them and freed them, saved from the wrath to come.

Now look at the prospect in the last verse. What will Jesus do when He comes?

He is going to change these bodies, and He is going to fashion them like unto His glorious body. He's going to make our bodies just like His. Now that's what it says. In the book of Romans, chapter 8, you remember,

verses 18-23, the apostle Paul there speaks of the fact that these bodies are going to be redeemed, for we are saved by hope. And the whole creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, and not only they, but ourselves also wait for the redemption of our bodies.

It's a wonderful thing, and Paul could say in 1 Corinthians 15:51, "I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep. We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." This mortal must put on immortality. This corruption must put on incorruption, and we're all going to be changed. When will this take place? When our Lord comes.

As I said a moment ago, we're waiting for the Saviour, and when He comes, He's going to change these bodies. He's going to make them absolutely immortal, incorruptible. This is the expectance. Remember Paul could say in the same book of Philippians, chapter 1, verse 6, "Being confident of this very thing, that He (God) who has begun a good work in us is going to complete it." And that's going to be completed when our bodies are changed.

You see, when Jesus died, He died for the whole man. He not only died for our souls, but He died for the transforming of your body, the old man. We quoted the other day in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and 24, "The God of peace sanctify you wholly and I pray God your whole being, spirit, soul, body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

My, what a prospect! We're going to be just like Him! Think of it, my friend. 1 John, chapter 3, verse 2, says that when we see Him, we will be just like Him. Isn't that a prospect? I know that our body is frail today, and it has its afflictions and its weaknesses, its lusts and its desires; but listen, listen, my friend, when Christ laid hold of you and saved you, He's going to complete the job. And I say this reverently, God will not be satisfied until you stand in His presence looking just like Jesus. This is the purpose of God in Romans 8:29. He has determined that we shall be conformed to the image of His Son; and it says in this verse that He's going to change these bodies of our humiliation, and He's going to fashion them like unto His own glorious body.

I remember the testimony of a dear saint, whose doctor had pronounced him incurable, that there was nothing left but to die. Sounds

very bad, doesn't it, but this dear saint said, "Well, if Jesus Christ doesn't come this year, I'll be going to see Him. If He's going to wait too long, I'm not going to wait. I'm going to see Him and isn't it wonderful? I'm going to see my Saviour."

And I could multiply that statement in different ways by the saints of God who have gone to be with the Lord here in my city. I've been with them when they left this scene. I've held their hands and prayed with them when they left. I tell you, my friends, it's a wonderful thing to have this blessed hope.

Like the old shepherd said, you remember, "Dear Lord Jesus, I've been waiting for You, been expecting You every day, and I'm tired waiting, dear Lord, so I'm going to be with You now." And he went to be with the Saviour; and this was the testimony he left with those who were standing by, shepherds of the hills while they were waiting upon him in his illness.

I tell you, it's a wonderful thing that death is a defeated foe; and the time is coming when every believer in Christ is going to be raised from the dead. Those of us who are on the earth at that time are going to be changed, and our bodies are going to be raised from the dead. The corruptible is going to put on incorruption. We who are mortal shall put on immortality.

He's not talking about the immortality of the soul. That's taken for granted in the Bible. He's talking about the body. It's going to be changed. It's going to be made like unto His glorious body. I say, my friend, what a prospect! What a prospect! Even a psalmist caught a glimpse of that when he said in the 17th Psalm, verse 15, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Now, how's He going to do this? He's going to do it according to the working of His power which is able to subdue all things unto Himself. How is it going to be done? According to His glorious power. Did you know that you already have in you, my Christian friend, the power of resurrection? We've covered this in an earlier lesson. It's folly for me to say I have the Spirit of God indwelling me if I do not believe that I also have the power of resurrection in me; and, if the Lord should come this very moment, my body would be transformed into His image.

Romans 8:11 says, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Isn't it

wonderful! The very Spirit that's going to change your body already lives in you. And I'd like to repeat this statement again. If you and I have in us the power that raised Jesus from the dead, that same power is going to change this body from mortal to immortal.

Don't you think that same Spirit of God, that same power can transform your life now? Isn't this what Paul means in Colossians 1:29 when he says, "I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily"?

Friend, there is no excuse for you or for me, absolutely no excuse. God's power of resurrection is living in you now by the indwelling Spirit of God; and if that Spirit of God can change your body, He can certainly control it. Neither I nor you have any excuse for living loose lives.

You say, I'm weak.

But He is strong.

I am frail.

Yes, but He's powerful.

And Paul, in Ephesians 3 prays that we might be made powerfully strong by His Spirit in the inner man, the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead and is already dwelling in you. And when the Lord Jesus comes, your body is going to be immediately, in the twinkling of an eye, transformed into an immortal body.

Did you ever stop to think of it?!

It may be today.

It may be today.

Now you read this third chapter of Philippians through again. It starts with God having no confidence in the flesh, and it ends with a group of people loving the Saviour, having their bodies changed and fashioned like unto the body, His body, of glory. That's what it says in this 21st verse. "It may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Oh, wonder of wonders, when God gets through with you, and when God gets through with this man, Mitchell, all of us are going to be just like the Lord Jesus. I say, what a prospect. What a hope!

Now whatever time the Lord had given to us here on earth, may we make ourselves available to this wonderful Saviour that He might be glorified in us today.

Today.

He might come today. But if He doesn't, may you and I be available for the Spirit of God to use us as channels for the display of His love, of His grace, of His compassion toward others.

May we beseech men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.

May the Lord bless you today, and may His face shine upon you, and may you be a channel to glorify the eternal Son of God—today.

Day 41

Philippians 4:1-4

Good-day, friends. The Christian experience is the enjoyment of Christ. The Spirit-filled life is the enjoyment of Christ; and the more we enjoy Him, the more we experience His power and His presence. And great will be our joy and our usefulness.

In the first three chapters, we found that the Lord Jesus is our very life. In chapter 2, we have the mind of Christ. In chapter 3, we have the great passions of the Apostle Paul—that he might win Christ, that he might be found in Christ, that he might know Christ in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, and that he might experience something of that wonderful union with Christ, being identified with Christ, not only in His death, but also in His resurrection. It's a wonderful thing to know that the Christ life is the enjoyment of Him. How we need that to have our minds and our hearts always open to the beauties and glories of our Savior who gave so much for us.

Now when we come to chapter 4, we find where the great desire of Paul's heart is that we might be filled with joy. We have this in chapter 1, we have it in chapter 2, we have it in chapter 3, now we have it in chapter 4. The great thing that is evident in the life and heart of a person who is really in fellowship with the Savior, enjoying divine life, is that subtle joy, that peace in the midst of chaos, that joy even in the midst of sorrow, that constant joy which is found in Christ.

So with your permission, I would like to read the first five verses of chapter 4 of Philippians.

- 4:1. Therefore, my brethren dearly [ASV omits dearly] beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.
- 4:2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.
- 4:3. And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.
- 4:4. Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

4:5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

We come now to the exhortations of the Apostle Paul, especially in these first 9 verses. He's talking to those whose hearts are set upon Christ; and the fruitage, of course, is joy and peace. You'll notice that in the first 5 verses, constant joy seems to be the desire of Paul for God's people. Notice the affection that Paul had for these Philippian Christians. I've mentioned this before, and I do it again. Paul had a wonderful place in his heart for these Philippian Christians. They had shared with him in the persecutions at Philippi. In fact, when they accepted the Savior, they experienced immediate persecution; and with the Apostle Paul in prison, they were in danger of prison, too. They had something in common with him, and Paul always had a tremendous place in his heart for these Philippian Christians. That's why he said:

4:1 Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, and longed for.

How he longed to be with them and enjoy their fellowship; and he calls them, "my joy and crown." He tells them to "stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." You'll notice in this first verse that we are to stand fast in the Lord. In the preceding portion of the book of Philippians, we find how we are to run, and how we are to walk. Now we are to stand fast.

I am reminded of that verse in Ephesians, chapter 6, verse 14, that having done all, we are to stand. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth" and so on. He talks about putting on the whole armor of God because we have a real enemy, because there are dangers and because we are in a warfare. We are not to run as cowards, but we are to stand fast in the Lord.

And, by the way, that's the only place a person *can* stand. In days of problems and tests and trials and frailty, it's a wonderful thing to know that we can stand fast in the Lord. And my friend, what better place to stand!

Do you feel weak? Do you falter? Do you stumble along as the oppression is heavy, the opposition is severe, and the circumstances are all topsy-turvy, and yet you can stand fast in the Lord.

You know, He is the same yesterday, and today and forever. You find this in Hebrews, chapter 13, if you follow through from verse 5 on, where we speak of the fact that the Lord is our Helper and He's the same yesterday and today and forever. He never changes in His attitude toward you and me. He never changes in His authority and power. He may change in how He

moves among people, but He never changes—He is ever our Savior and the object of our love. Stand fast in the Lord.

Remember He has all authority in heaven and on earth. Remember that the battle is already won. The war's already won. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. And day by day, we have tests and trials and opposition. We have an implacable enemy, so the best place to stand is in the Lord. I repeat it, what better place can we stand!

You remember Paul speaking to the Galatian church, where they were turning away from the grace of God, in chapter 5, the first verse, where he speaks of the fact that we should stand in our liberty wherewith Christ had made us free and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Follow through your New Testament on how we're told to stand in the Lord. You remember in Romans, chapter 5, the 2nd verse: "By faith we have access into this grace (this grace of justification, of which he is speaking there) wherein we stand." It's a wonderful place to be in Christ.

And then we are to walk in Him, as you have it in Colossians 2:6, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." He is all we need in order to walk. He is all we need in order to stand. He supplies all that we need. I think the apostle Paul here is calling us to steadfastness.

You know, and I'm saying this very frankly and kind of bluntly possibly, but there are so many Christians who, for some reason or other, are wishy-washy. They're up and down. One day you find them happy in the Lord, and the next day they're down in the dumps. This calls for steadfastness. There's so much where people are called hither and yon. They don't know what to believe. They don't know where they are. They haven't that assurance. They haven't that joy in the Lord, that certainty of salvation in Christ.

And here Paul is calling us Christians, we who have put our trust in the Savior, we who have come into right relationship with Him through new birth, he's calling for us to stand fast in the Lord. Whatever happens in the world, whatever the circumstances are in our country or whatever problems, trials, afflictions, and sorrows you and I may go through, we are to stand fast in the Lord.

I tell you it's a wonderful thing to be able to stand fast, to be steadfast. God give to us in these last days men and women who shall be steadfast in the Lord, who will know Him not only as the Savior, but as Lord; and when

the tests and trials and sorrows of life come, they know exactly where to go. It's a great thing, my friend, to get in the Word of God and find your answer there for what you need and what I need.

Now Paul is calling these Philippian Christians his “joy and crown.” You know, the 2nd chapter of 1 Thessalonians, he said to let these pagans, these idolaters who had turned to God from idols, these who had come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, he said to them, “What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming, for you are our glory and our joy.”

Did you ever stop to think that the crown, joy and rejoicing, is the soul-winner's crown? And I think Paul has in the back of his mind something along this line, You are “my joy and my crown.”

Paul had led them to the Savior, and when you stop to think of that little Philippian church—started by a woman who was a successful businesswoman, and then there came into that little assembly of God's people, here is a girl who has had the demons cast out of her.

Here is a Roman jailer, a man who had been taught to be a sadist, to be brutal and cruel with his prisoners. No doubt he was the one who had beaten Paul and Silas that night and put them in the inner dungeon and fastened their feet in the stocks and more likely poured salt on their wounds. But under the transforming power of the Gospel, he became a member of that church at Philippi.

So Paul says, “You are my joy and my crown.” Just like he could say to the Thessalonian church, “You are my crown of joy and rejoicing at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

I wonder, as I talk to you, my friend, and I speak especially to those of you, who really know the Savior. Can you say that you're going to have a crown of joy and rejoicing? Do you know whether you have led people to the Savior or not? Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing to have the crown of joy and rejoicing and cast the crown at His feet and crown Him Lord of all? And to find those in His presence who were led to the Savior through your testimony, through your life, possibly through some acts of which you knew nothing.

It may be I'm talking to some who say, “Well, Mr. Mitchell, I've never had the privilege of leading a precious soul to Christ.”

Now, if I were you, I wouldn't say that. You're trying to please the Lord. Who knows? Who knows what lives you have touched? You may not be conscious of it, but as you've walked with the Savior and you've done those little acts of kindness just because you love the Lord, who knows, but what some people have been brought unto the sound of the Gospel or have come to know the Savior through you, by your words and by your actions, by your walk in Christ, and they become your joy and crown of rejoicing.

May you today have the joy of bearing testimony for Him by your life, by your actions, and by your words, and may the Lord wonderfully bless you today for His name's sake.

Day 42

Philippians 4:1-4 (continued)

Good-day, friends. And if I may be allowed to read those first 4 verses of Philippians, chapter 4:

- 4:1. Therefore, my brethren dearly [ASV omits dearly] beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.
- 4:2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.
- 4:3. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.
- 4:4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Verse 2, “Lord (these were two women by the way, who were workers together with Paul) and I...” We were speaking in our last lesson concerning the fact that we ought to stand fast in the Lord, and the ground of our standing doesn't change. What a wonderful thing, I repeat it, to stand fast in the Lord, to have Him as the object not only of our affection and devotion, but the one to whom we can go, whatever the circumstance of life may be, to stand in Him. Remember that He is sovereign.

Remember that Ephesians 1:11 declares that ‘He works all things out after the counsel of His own will,’ and because all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, for those who are the called according to His purpose, can stand in Him. My friend, He's not asleep. Our Savior hasn't weakened. His resources haven't run out, and you can stand fast in the Lord, and to be able to say with Paul, ‘We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.’

Then Paul spoke of the fact that they were his crown of joy and rejoicing. You know, there's a certain joy that comes to a Christian when he testified for His Savior to some man, woman, or young person and leads them to a knowledge of Christ, leads then into a relationship with Christ. There's a great joy attached to it, a joy that you don't find in any other thing, the joy of leading a soul out of darkness into light, out of death into life, from sin into a Savior, and think of it! This joy goes right on into eternity.

We become filled with the joy of the Lord because we have had the privilege of leading precious souls to Christ. They in turn become our crown of joy and rejoicing. He mentions this here in Phil., chapter 4. He mentions it again in I Thessalonians, chapter 2, the last two verses.

Now shall we go on. Let us be steadfast because we're standing in the Lord. Now in verses 2 to 3, he makes the request for us to be of the same mind. You remember we had this in chapter 2, the first 3 verses. You have it in Eph., chapter 4, the 3rd verse. Indeed the very first exhortation in the book of Eph. is to be of the same mind. This prevents quarreling among God's people. Now remember that these women were some of Paul's fellow laborers, but for some reason or another, neither one of these women, Euodias or Syntyche had the mind of Christ. They weren't of the same mind, and Paul is exhorting them that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

You remember in chapter 2, we had the same thought here, in verse 2, "Fulfill ye my joy, that you be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, being of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem each other better than themselves.. and so on...Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." This great desire to be of the same mind.

You see, this is what causes trouble among God's people: the lack of humility. We want our own way, instead of being of the same mind; and I think he's entreating Epaphroditus, who was the pastor there at Philippi, to help these women.

He said in the 3rd verse, "I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, and with Clement also, and with my other fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life." And he appeals to Epaphroditus at Philippi to help these women be of the same mind.

You know, when God's people in an assembly have not the same mind in the Lord, you're going to have trouble. Knowing something of human nature, we just have trouble. We're living in bodies that are not yet redeemed, and to me, one of the great tragedies of today is that so many evangelical churches have troubles, have quarrels. It's a sad thing. It's a sad commentary on the Gospel before your neighbors and before your friends.

I remember how my heart bled one time here in Portland in The Oregonian on the very front page, where a church in the city of Portland was

having a business meeting, and do you know what they called in? They called in a couple of policemen to sit in on the meeting. The contention was so severe and so hot. Think of it! Think of how it affected the message of the Gospel not only in that church, but in every Gospel church in this whole area, in your church.

You say, “Well, Mr. Mitchell, no man’s going to wipe his feet on me. I’m not going to be a doormat to anybody.”

Well, maybe you wouldn’t, and by the way, it wouldn’t hurt you sometime to be a doormat if it’s for the Lord. If you’re trusting the Lord, my friend, you can be sure of one thing. The Lord’s always on time, and He’ll straighten things out in His own way, and too often we butt in. We interfere with God’s dealing with people. We try to do God’s job. We take away His prerogatives, instead of walking quietly and softly before the Lord, and if you and a brother have a difference of opinion, you can expect this. Same in your families.

If you have the same mind, you’ve got peace, you’ve got joy, you’ve got blessing, whether it’s in the family or in the Christian assembly. Be of the same mind. If you differ with your brother, let’s come before the Lord in the matter.

Don’t get bitter. Don’t demand your own way. Don’t you say, “Well, I know I’m right, and everybody else is wrong.” Maybe you’re the one that’s wrong. At least your spirit is wrong, and Paul here is pleading for the glory of Christ, that these women be of the same mind, and he asks the pastor or the worker, and I think here it’s Epaphroditus—well, he goes on to speak about Epaphroditus later on in the chapter—I believe that he asked him to help these women be of the same mind, to encourage them in the Lord, to get them together, that there be a manifestation of humility, and trust the Lord to work out His program, His desire in your assembly.

Then he closes the passage by saying in verse 4, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.”

Notice in the first verse we are to stand fast in the Lord. In verse 4, we are to rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice. Now you remember in chapter 3, he could say, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Now I think Paul was going to finish the book of Philippians in chapter 3, but he began to think about these things in the assembly, so the 4th chapter is added. “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, stand fast in the Lord.

...Now then rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.” Wonderful thing here.

Why should I rejoice? Well, what do you want to do? Where are you to rejoice? In the Lord. When? At all times. You mean in times of distress and trouble? You mean in times of sorrow and affliction? Yes. That doesn't mean you're going to be hilarious, but it means that you are going to enjoy a peace, a restfulness, a joy there. We are the objects of the love of Christ. Hence, rejoice in Him. Your circumstances change continually, but He never changes.

Do you ever think of it? He's the God over all circumstances. He's sovereign. He knows exactly what you need. He knows exactly your condition and your position, and He's sufficient, my friend. The question is, why don't we go to the Lord? To be of the same mind, and if I haven't the same mind with my brother, then let me seek the face of the Lord.

Let me go to the Word of God. Maybe I'm the one that is wrong, not he. And I would suggest that with our minds fixed upon the Lord, in love with the Lord, rejoicing in the Lord, standing fast in the Lord, when you meet your brother who is at variance with you, it may be that you'll find that you love him more. You'll understand him more. I think often, too often with us Christians, we just don't communicate the one to the other. We have our ideas, and the other party has his ideas, and the trouble is we don't communicate. We're biased in our vision, in our thinking. We're biased in what the other man sees.

Remember that he may have circumstances of which you know nothing. He may see some things that you don't see, and vice versa. But be of the same mind, for the Lord's sake, even though they may not agree with you.

Let's manifest that true humility and say, “Well, Lord, I still believe that I'm right, but I'm trusting You by the Spirit of God to move on my brethren that this thing may be to His glory.”

But do not split up the people of God. Do not cause divisions among God's people. In fact, the Bible says, “Mark those who make for divisions and have no fellowship with them.” So I think Paul here is pleading for these Philippian Christians, especially the women in the assembly, that they be of one mind and that they rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, rejoice. I say, my friend, it's a wonderful thing. It's a wonderful thing that

you can rejoice in the Lord in spite of your circumstances, and I'm sure this is true. This is a revelation to the people of the world.

“Why,” you say, “man, that’s supernatural.” That’s right, but is not the Christian life a supernatural life? It’s Christ living out His life in you and in me, and friend, we can well afford, well afford to put the matter in His hands that He might work it out to His praise and to His glory. Now may the Lord bless you today, and may your heart be filled with His joy and with His blessing for His name’s sake.

Day 43

Philippians 4:5

Good-day, friends. It's been a real joy to talk about our Savior, whom we all love, and I speak to you believers on this, and to know that He has not left us in our ignorance and that the Spirit of God through the Savior has made such marvelous provision that our joy might be filled full. In fact this was the great yearning of the apostle Paul's heart in his two prayers in the book of Ephesians, chapter 1 and 3. It was the great desire of our Lord's heart.

A few hours before He went to the cross, our Lord said, "These things have I spoken unto you . . . that your joy might be full (John 15:11). John the Apostle repeated this in 1 John 1:4, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

Full joy can be the portion of every believer, not only the mature believers, but the babes in Christ. Whether old or young, your joy can be constant because of your relationship and fellowship and union with the Son of God Himself. He wants your joy to be filled full. Some people have an idea that when one becomes a Christian, they're sour, and they're never happy. They go around with a long face. They're a joy-killer.

My friend, the truth is just the opposite. The ones who have real joy, the ones who have real peace, the ones who have the real contentment are those who are in Christ. You see, their joy doesn't depend on materialism. Their joys do not depend on sociability. Their joys depend upon the Lord, and wherever they go in society, they radiate something of this joy and this peace and this blessing which we have in Christ.

This is the great desire of Paul now in writing to the Philippian church in chapter 4. He has been speaking of the fact that they should be of one mind, one heart, that their joy might be full, that they should stand fast in the Lord, and not only so, but they should rejoice in the Lord and again he says, rejoice.

Now we come to the fifth verse of this chapter.

4:5 Let your moderation [forbearance] be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

Now mark what he says. Let your forbearance, let your gentleness, be considerate, if I can use those words, let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. What does he mean? He wants us to be tender and gentle. Remember he's just been talking about them being of one mind. Apparently in the Philippian church there was a little trouble between some of the women, the co-labourers together with Paul.

Now you wouldn't expect that, would you, that those who were fellow-workers with Paul should have a difference of opinion, that there would be a little contention between them. But this is so, and Paul asks Epaphroditus to kind of help them be of the same mind.

And then he goes into verse 5, and don't take verse 5 away from the first 4 verses. Let your moderation, let your forbearance, your gentleness, your tenderness, in other words, be considerate, be considerate, let your consideration be known unto all men. A gentleness to be made known that everyone will realize that you belong to the Savior.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 2-3, the apostle Paul speaks of the fact that we all are living epistles, known and read of all men. As long as we live in the world, no man lives to himself, and no man dies to himself, and I quote Romans on this, "and whether we live or die, we're the Lord's."

But the Lord has left us down here for a purpose; otherwise we wouldn't be here. If the purpose of the Lord for us on earth was completed, we wouldn't be here. We'd be at home with the Lord in glory, but the very fact that we're still on earth means He's not through with us. He's got a purpose. He wants us to be living epistles, known and read of all men.

Hence, let your moderation, let your life of gentleness and tenderness, of forbearance, your consideration for the other be made to all men. Why? Because the Lord is at hand, or, if I may change the wording, because the Lord is now present.

You remember, He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." He could say in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The Lord is now present, right where you are, in your circumstances, in your home, in your office, wherever you may be—you who are listening in to me today. Remember that today, wherever you are, if you love the Savior, the Lord is there. And because of the presence of the Lord, let's be of the same mind. Let's be gentle one toward the other. Let's be considerate one of the other. Let's be long suffering and tender, one with

another. You see, if we were thinking about the Lord, we wouldn't quarrel with each other, would we? Would we?

Don't you think that you and I would act different if this realization were to strike our hearts as we walk and move in our churches, in our classes, in our walk before our neighbors, and our friends, and especially among those in the church, for this is what he's talking about—God's people. The Lord is present. The Lord is at hand.

Friend, then don't quarrel with our brother. Even though you think you're being unjustly dealt with, can't you put that in the hands of the Lord who is present? You see He reads the other fellow's heart, too. He sees his motive, which you and I don't see, and so the Lord being present, understands each one of us, our circumstances, all that we are. And you and I can well afford to leave the matter in the hands of the Lord. Hence, be considerate. Let your moderation, let your manner of life, let your gentleness and your tenderness be made unto all men. Why? Because the Lord is now present.

Or I may take it the other way. Because the Lord is at hand, and because the coming of the Lord is near, let there be no more quarreling. That's what he's talking about. Be of the same mind. Let your moderation be evident. Why? Because the Lord may come today. I wonder if you really believe the Lord would come today. Would you change your program for the day?

Somebody asked Mr. Wesley that one time, "What would you do if you really knew the Lord was coming today? What would you change?" and he said, "I would change nothing. If the Lord should come today, He'd find me doing what I'm doing, because I believe I'm walking today in the will of God."

The Lord may come today. Certainly we wouldn't want to be found quarreling with each other, when the Lord comes.

When I think of board meetings in churches and organizations among God's people, classes, and meetings, and what have you, the general life of churches and people, I wonder what we would think if we knew the Lord was going to come right now. I think there would be a lot of changing of policy, and lot of changing of programs, and a lot of changing of the thing we were going to do. Live today as if the Lord was coming today. In other words, live in fellowship with the Savior.

Allow me to do this with you. In Romans, chapter 13, verses 11-14, “in view of the coming of the Lord—we are not to live in the lusts of the flesh.” In the book of James, chapter 5, verses 8 to 9, we are to be patient because the Lord is coming. And in I Peter 4:7, we are to watch unto prayer. Why? Because the end of all things is at hand.

In Hebrews 10:25, neglect not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, and the so much the more as you see the day approaching.” In view of the coming of the Lord, we must not neglect the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.

May I plead with you Christians then, in view of the fact that the Lord is at hand, meet with God’s people, not just Sunday morning, not just in Sunday school. This is a very, very hard thing for a pastor to see people coming to Sunday School and then leave and don’t stay for the morning meeting, and some come for the morning meeting and don’t come for Sunday School, and they come for the morning meeting and don’t come back at night, and of course they don’t come back for the prayer meeting in the middle of the week.

In other words, you’re so busy with life, we’re so busy with the material things of life, we’re so busy with our friends, we’ve neglected the Son of God. For some reason, the truth of the coming of the Lord has never gripped our hearts. May I remind you of Hebrews, chapter 10: 37 and 38, where the apostle writes, “He that shall come will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith.”

The life of faith is the life of fellowship with God, and because of the immanency of the coming of the Lord, we ought to live that life of faith, that life of fellowship with the Lord Himself. I tell you, my friend, in view of the coming of the Lord, let us quit our quarreling. Let’s be of the same mind. Because of the coming of the Lord, let us not be found in the lusts of the flesh, in the lusts of the mind. Because of the soon coming of the Lord, let us be patient one with another. Because of the coming of the Lord, because all things are at hand, let us watch unto prayer; and because the Lord is coming, the day of the Lord is at hand, do not neglect the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.

And let me emphasize that, will you? I’m sure you’d encourage a lot of saints, a lot of people, if you will attend as many meetings as you can in your own churches, to meet together with God’s people. “Well,” you say, “I

don't, I don't like what our pastor says." Don't go just for that. Don't go to a meeting just because of a preacher. You go for fellowship with God. You go for fellowship with His people. Remember that, will you? And if you're waiting for the coming of the Lord, and if you find no place in your assembly where you can have that fellowship, that blessing, then find someplace. Find some of God's people with whom you can have real fellowship, and enjoy the Lord.

Because He that shall come, will come, and He will not tarry. I ought to live the life of faith, and I've been quoting from these different epistles on this one thing: let your moderation be known, let your manner of life, or as we were saying, let your forbearance, your consideration for each other, your gentleness, your tenderness one toward another, be made known to all men, be made evident.

Why?

Because the Lord is at hand and the Lord is now present.

And may the Lord bless you today for His name's sake.

Day 44

Philippians 4:6–9

Good-day, friends. As we have been studying the book of Philippians, this book of practical Christian experience, my heart has been filled with the joy of the Lord in the knowledge that Christian experience is nothing less, nothing more than the enjoyment of Christ Himself. And when you are enjoying Christ for Himself then you begin to experience something of what a spirit filled life is; the enjoyment of divine life. This which we can experience now. Some people wait until they can get to heaven, but, my friend, you can have that today—the enjoyment of Christ now.

And in the book of Philippians, chapter 4, we've been dealing here with the exhortations of Paul with respect to his people. For example, we've been dealing with the five 5 verses where he has exhorted us to stand fast in the Lord. He exhorted us to rejoice in the Lord; to be of the same mind and have the same desires so that the Lord will be magnified. And this in view of the coming of the Savior. Or, if you want to take that for the verse because the Lord is now present.

Our life should show forth something of the tenderness and consideration and love for each other that will glorify the Lord and attract people to our Savior. Remember again that we're talking about a supernatural life. Christianity is a supernatural thing: it is life in Christ. And when you and I are walking in fellowship with Him and seek to encourage each other; be tender and compassionate one toward another. Not fighting and bickering and separating God's people and manifesting bitterness, but rather the joy of manifesting Christ. And the Lord wants to do this through you. I've so often times said, (and I don't mind repeating it) the life of Jesus Christ defies imitation but it can be reproduced by the Spirit of God in and through His people.

Now let's go on in our study in verses 6–9:

4:6. Be careful for nothing [in nothing be anxious]; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

4:7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [guard] your hearts and minds [thoughts] through Christ Jesus.

4:8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest [honorable], whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

4:9. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Let me stop right here; it's a good division. We've had constant joy and we have the place where we have that rejoicing is in Christ. And because the Lord is now present, or because the Lord is at hand, how we ought to live. Now He encourages us in the verse: "Be careful for nothing;" - Or as has been well said, "In nothing be anxious."

Here we come to a real experience in Christian life. Here you have "be careful, or in nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." My, it's a wonderful thing this. You see, the very fact that you can come with confidence, with boldness into the presence of God and make your prayers, your supplications and your thanksgiving—let them be known unto God.

Sometimes I wonder if we Christians realize the access we have into the presence of God. You see, we worry and we fret because we don't know much about this: "In nothing be anxious." Don't worry.

You know the 37th Psalm where the Psalmist says: "Fret not thyself because of evil doers," and so on; my, how we worry and we fret as Christians. It's a dishonor to the Lord. And we're all guilty of it to a more or less degree. And instead of showing forth something of the beautiful, marvelous life in Christ we're "worry warts" as somebody has said. We worry and we fret. I suggest you read that 37th Psalm. Don't you fret because the unrighteous seem to prosper.

And he goes on to speak of what you should do about giving yourself over to the Lord. I tell you it's a wonderful thing not to fret. If I may speak from a physical viewpoint, fretting, worrying, affects your body. It affects your thinking; it affects your whole being; it affects your spiritual life. You begin to be occupied with things and with people and with yourself; you become self sympathetic, you begin to worry and worry, and you fret and you fret, and you're a dishonor to the Lord.

Now he says, “Be anxious for nothing.” “in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” You know, I think the Lord has this in mind, possibly, in John 16:23–28, where the Lord is telling us about this question of requests. Did you ever stop to think of it, when Jesus said, “In that day ye shall ask in My name.” That is, the day when the Spirit of God would indwell His people—that’s now.

When you received the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior and you were brought into right relationship with Him, the Spirit of God took your body and made it His temple. Now in that day, said Jesus, you shall ask Me, you make your requests, in My name—ye shall ask in My name.

And then He made a very, very remarkable statement when He said, “I do not say that I will pray for you, for the Father himself loves you because you love me.”

If you take those verses, there are 8 times in 8 verses. He mentions the Father. In other words, requests are answered because of God’s love for us. We come into His presence with our requests because of relationship. Don’t you love that verse in Romans 8:14–16:

8:14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

8:15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit [spirit] of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

8:16. The Spirit itself [himself] beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

This is the relationship of a little boy coming into the presence of his daddy. This is what it is. “Abba, Father.” Where a little fellow would say to somebody else, “He’s my daddy. He takes care of me.” I’m being reverent when I say this. I want you to get this wonderful, close relationship there is between you and God. He’s your Father. You have access by the Spirit of God into the very presence of God. You can come with your requests.

You say, “Mr. Mitchell, I’m not good enough to come.”

No. No, you’re not. Neither am I. Neither is anybody else. But we come in the name of the Lord Jesus.

“What do you mean by that?”

We come in all the merit; in all the beauty and all the righteousness of Christ. This is what Jesus is saying. “You ask in My name. You come as if I Myself were making the request. And My father will meet your request, not because you love Him but because He loves you.” Now you think about that. That’s why He says here, “Be anxious for nothing.” A child is never anxious. Even though the family may be having its problems, the child isn’t having its problems. The child goes to daddy or to mommy. It’s a relationship.

The child trusts the father and the mother to take care of it; to supply its needs. And the child is not backward to come to father and mother and ask for what the child wants. Now you may not give it to the child because it’s not the best thing for the child. But what I’m trying to get to you is the fact of this wonderful relationship, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

Isn’t it a wonderful thing? I’ll never forget the day when I, for the first time, saw the marvel of this relationship. Oh, I knew I was saved. In fact I was out preaching the gospel and had the joy of seeing souls saved. But this intimacy; this wonder of wonders that you and I can come in the presence of our Father and cry “Abba.” Come with that confidence. And my Father not only hears me but He answers.

But if the request is such that it will dishonor the Lord or bring trouble to you, or heartache to you, then maybe the Lord will not answer your request. I am not saying that He will answer every request, but we can make our requests—every one of them to him—and do it with thanksgiving; do it with praise; to come as a trusting child to a loving father.

What I’m trying to say to you this morning is, you have such a wonderful relationship to God, you should be of one mind; one heart; to be tender, compassionate, understanding each other; considerate of each other. And now—don’t worry; don’t fret. “In nothing be anxious; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made know unto God. “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will (garrison), will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

My, what a passage of scripture. And I’m afraid, sometimes, we take passages failing to realize there are other portions of the Word of God which

would open the truth to our hearts. That's why I quoted to you from John 16. There we have the ground for requests. We come in the presence of God in all the righteousness of Christ. Accepted in the Beloved. And the Father meets our requests; He meets our needs. Not because of our much asking; not because of our love for Him, but because of His love for us.

Ah, my friends, when you think of His love for you and for me it breaks you down. And we come as redeemed children of God to a loving Father. We cry, "Abba, Father." Knowing that He's more ready and more willing to meet our needs than we are to have those needs met.

And how glad I am that the Lord doesn't always answer my prayers and meet every one of my requests. He knows what's best for me; He knows what's best for you. And because He loves you, He'll do the right thing, you can be sure of that. He will always do the best thing; the right thing for your good and for His glory.

May you have the joy today of coming into His presence, standing upon your relationship that you are the object of His love.

Day 45

Philippians 4:6–9 (continued)

Good-day, friends. We rejoice in the fact that the Spirit of God has revealed to us the wonderful things concerning the person of our Savior, our relationship to Him and our enjoyment of Him.

Christian experience is the enjoyment of Christ Himself. And in discussing these things, with young people especially, I try to point out—it's just what we know of Christ is what we know of God; and all that we know of God is just what we know of Christ. And Christian life and Christian experience is the enjoyment of Him personally. We talk these days about a victorious life; a delivered life. Different versions—words—of the same truth, but when it's all boiled down it's the enjoyment of Christ; the enjoyment of divine life. And this has been made possible for us by a Savior.

And as we come to the 4th chapter of the book of Philippians, we find where he's dealing here with Christian experience and he's talking now in verses 6 through 9 about our constant peace. He has spoken about standing fast in the Lord; about rejoicing in the Lord; of being tender, one toward another, because the presence of the Lord, or the Lord is at hand. And now in verse 6, if I may go back to verses 6 and 7:

4:6. Be careful for nothing (in nothing be anxious); but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

4:7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep (guard) your hearts and minds (thoughts) through Christ Jesus.

We were speaking in our lesson yesterday about not being anxious for anything. Not to worry. Not to fret about things. It's an amazing thing how we would love to hurry God. I'm reminded of that verse in I Pet. 5:7: To "cast all your care upon Him." Why? "Because He careth for you." Think of it! You are the object of God's care. The moment you and I accepted the Savior, born of the Spirit of God, we became a member of the family of God. Adopted into His family as His sons and heirs. We became the object of His love and affection.

We needn't go any farther into this except to point out this fact that we try to hurry God too much. We want God to hurry up and do what we want Him to do, and the Lord is never in a hurry; He's always on time. And remember again, please, He will always do the right thing. He may not give you what you asked for. He will give you that which will bring glory to Him and joy and praise and thanksgiving to you.

Now you will notice in verse 6—having said “Be careful for nothing...” and about prayer, then He said: And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [guard] your hearts and minds [thoughts] through Christ Jesus.” Now here you're dealing with the experimental side of peace. Romans 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith we have [let us have] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We are no longer at enmity with Him. Having been declared righteous by faith we're no longer at enmity. There's nothing between the believer and God. We are righteous in His presence. This is true of all believers. This is not experimental; this is because of what Christ did at the cross. In Ephesians 2:14-17, you remember where we read there that our Lord made peace—that He is our peace, and that He preached peace.

In other words, our Savior who is the foundation of our peace never changes. He, personally, is our peace. In John 14:27 our Savior could say: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Here is the gift of peace. In John 16:33, Jesus could say, “In me you shall have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, but cheer up, I've overcome the world.” “—in me you'll have peace...” Now this is true concerning all believers. The foundation for peace has not changed: We have peace with God; we have the gift of peace—He IS our peace; in Him is peace.

But now in this verse He's not talking about that. He's talking about something you experience. If I stop worrying—or if I may put it another way; if I live in constant fellowship with the Savior; if He becomes the object of my affection and my fellowship, I will experience a peace that passeth the understanding of men. This is something that the world knows nothing about.

How often I have heard as a pastor here in Portland of the unsaved people, the neighbor saying, concerning some dear Christian woman, the

neighbor possibly, “I don’t know how she takes it. I don’t know how calm she can keep under such circumstances. She’s had such afflictions, she’s had so much sorrow; things have come into her life. I wouldn’t be able to take it,” they have said. She’s quite sweet about it. She has a peace; she has a steadiness; she seems to be so confident through the whole thing.

Yes, my friends, they’re seeing the life of Christ demonstrated in the life of a Christian. When you and I get our hearts occupied with Him we experience a peace that passeth all understanding. When all the waters are troubled and when the world is in a chaotic condition and circumstances are hard and sometimes bitter, there can be a peace—a peace that God is working all things out after the counsel of His own will. Peace in the knowledge that He knows and He understands and that He cares.

Sometimes we sing that song, “Does Jesus care when my heart is grieved?” And when my life is full of afflictions and sorrow; does He care?

And the chorus goes something like this:

“Oh, yes, He cares; I know He cares.

His heart is touched with my grief.

When the days are weary and the long nights dreary,

I know my Savior cares.”

And, my friend, I’ve seen this operate in the lives of God’s people. Sometimes, even myself, I’ve wondered, how can they stand, how can they be so sweet, how can they be so patient, how can they be so loving. Why is it—why is it that they carry along with a peace, with a rest, with a tenderness, with an understanding, that’s beyond the comprehension of men. There’s only one answer, my friend; the peace of God which passeth all understanding. So guard your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus.

And now in verse 8, the next verse, we have another thing—marvelous thing: “Finally brethren, (another one of His “finallys”) (complete through verse 9). In verse 6, the peace of God shall garrison your heart and mind. In verse 9, “and the God of peace shall be with you.” His presence is with us.

Here you have in verses 8 and 9 the realization of Christ in our very thoughts. In chapter 2 we have His mind. Here it is experimental. You remember what the prophet said, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” These are true of Paul.

Now look at that 8th verse; look at all those things:

4:8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Don't think about the lusts, the desires of the flesh; things that dishonor the Lord—think of Him. You know, I'm of the persuasion this is one of the greatest needs today, especially among our young people. You can't help but see in the world in your papers, in your television, in your magazines, and schools, social life—2 or 3 things that seem to obsess the American people, and one of them is sex. Another is money, and the other, of course, is pleasure.

But today one of the most common words used is this question of sex with the result that young people are thinking about these things and the fruitage of it is immorality. Now for Christians, and I plead with you who are Christians who are young people; and you fathers and mothers, set the pace—(repeat virtues). And as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. If a person is thinking about unholy things he's going to do unholy acts. If you're thinking about impure things, you'll be doing impure acts. What is in your heart and your mind; that which occupies your thinking, is going to affect your acting. And God deliver us from some of the garbage that is on our newsstands.

When I think of the things that are portrayed on our newsstands, the lasciviousness, the licentiousness of it all, the suggestive things. And every girl and boy that goes by sees it, and their minds have become fouled with the immorality and the perversions of the day. And I would plead with you to read the word of God. As the dear Psalmist could say, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."

And it's an amazing thing to me, even in our churches among our own Christian young people, those who profess to know the Savior, the cesspools which are around their feet. And we pray for them. And you set the example: and whatever things are holy and righteous and just and pure, you think on these things. And again I say, what captivates your thought will affect your action. God grant in these days we may have a people of God who will walk Godly in Christ Jesus. And as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.

Think on these things today, will you? May your heart and mind be occupied with the blessed person of our Savior; hence, your thinking will be right.

Day 46

Philippians 4:9–13

Good-day, friends. In these days when there is so much to cloud the issue, so much to defile the heart and mind of people, I plead with you elderly Christians to be much in prayer for our young people who love the Savior. When they go to college or high school or even grade school, when they go past the newsstands, when they read our newspapers, when they see television —the suggestive things that are impure, immoral and corrupt—they get their minds thinking on these things and their whole life is going to be affected and tarnished and fouled up. I would plead with you Christians to be much in prayer.

Let us not bemoan the fact of what things are happening today, the moral perversions and the immorality of the day if we're not praying especially for our young people. I'm telling you, they're surrounded by quicksand and cesspools. You and I can do a great deal to encourage them in the Savior.

May I plead with you and I plead with you all young people who love the Savior, to spend time in the Word of God. Again I want to repeat it, you and I cannot live a spiritual life apart from the Word of God. This is the weapon which God has given to us. It's here we see the beauties and the glories of Christ. It is in this Word that we see the purposes and plan and will of God. It's through the Word of God that we are morally cleansed. It's here we know what to do.

I plead with you and I don't mind repeating this. This is the burden of our hearts when we think of the thousands of professing Christians among our young people who are faced with these things continually in their text books, in their magazines, in their story books, on the street, in relationship to other young people who don't know the Savior.

A Christian young person has a very hard row to hoe if he's going to walk with God. But he must walk there, otherwise he's going to fail and fall into the temptations of the day. And may I again remind you of this verse 8:

4:8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure,

whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Keep your mind on good things. And when you keep your mind on things that are good and spiritual, your mind will not be cluttered up with the evil and the unholy corrupt things of the day. Then he goes onto say in verse 9, and here is an amazing thing how this man Paul can put himself up as an example in this matter, for I read:

4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

In other words, Paul's life before the Philippian church was an open book. They heard his words; they heard his messages; they saw his life, and his life paralleled what he taught. And so he could say, "What you've heard and seen in me and learned and received from me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." It's not only peace with God as you have it in verse 7, but the peace of God, and the God of peace will be with you. He is to be our constant companion; hence, we can enjoy peace all along the way.

As we had it in Ephesians 2:14: "He is our peace." So we have in verses 6–9 this constant peace. The Christian experience is not a life of fretting and being anxious and of worrying, but a life of trusting Him. We cast all our care upon Him because He cares for us. He never leaves us, and the God of peace shall be with us.

Now in verses 10–13 we come on down to the third exhortation of Paul in this fourth chapter, and this is an exhortation to constant rest and confidence. In verses 10–13 again we have Christian experience. Now I want you to mark Paul's tenderness and how he rejoiced in the Lord because of their care for him. Now let's look at the passage for a moment:

4:10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

4:11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

4:12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

4:13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Now let me just stop here for a few moments. I want you to mark first of all his tenderness in verse 10:

4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

You know, what he's really saying here—I rejoice that your heart was with me and that you would have certainly met my need, only you didn't have the opportunity to do it. The door wasn't open for you to do it. But I love you just the same because of your care and because of your thoughts for me.

You know, it's a wonderful thing to have that tenderness toward God's people, to be appreciative of their thought for you. I think too many of us, and possibly I can say this for myself, how easy it is to become so occupied with doing and with service and with what have you that you neglect those little, wonderful things of understanding, of appreciation of what other Christians do for you.

Let us remember that we can bring joy and blessing to people by a little word of appreciation for the things that have happened, for the things they have done. It may be a kind word. It may be a little action about which you really didn't know anything, but you just felt like doing something and you did it. You never realized the tremendous effect upon the other party.

So it's a wonderful thing the tenderness this man had for the Philippian Christians who wanted to do something for him but didn't have the opportunity. And then in verse 11, we find his constant confidence and rest where we read:

4:11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

I tell you, this is the secret of a wonderful life. And I'm so happy that Paul did not say, "I have received, I have learned by revelation, that whatever state I am, therewith to be content." He had learned it. He learned by experience that whatever his condition was he was going to be content. Whatever the circumstances, he learned to be content. He learned from daily experience God's care for him. Whether he was full—he was full—that was fine. If he was empty—fine, too. He knew that he was in the hands of his God, of his Father.

And I might say again, he's learned the secret of a real life; he was content, at peace, rejoicing, whatever the circumstances.

You know, that dear old Greek philosopher, Socrates—can I quote from him? He said, “The wealthiest man is he who is content with the least.” I'm reading from Socrates, who lived about 200 or more BC. And if a pagan philosopher knew that much about truth, brother, what about you and me who are in Christ, of whom Socrates knew nothing. But he knew something about life; he knew something about contentment and the peace and the rest that one can have in this very thing in one's circumstances—to be content with the least.

And Paul says,

4:11. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

4:12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

I tell you, it's a wonderful thing.

And I say this kindly: I would that you and I could learn the secret of a real life in Christ. Whatever He sends our way—in fact, I'll put it this way—since the Lord has made us the object of His love and affection, nothing can come into your life or mine but what He knows all about. And if He allows these things into our life because He trusts us in the affliction, then let us rejoice.

As Corinthians 10:13 says, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

You and I are the objects of His wonderful love. God grant then to you and to me the joy of peace and rest and contentment today. I have learned, said Paul, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.

And may you enjoy contentment, rest and peace in your Savior today for His name's sake.

Day 47

Philippians 4:13

Good-day, friends. Oh, the confidence, the rest and the peace we have when we see that the Lord Jesus is ever present with us, that the God of peace is with us, that there is never a second of the day He ever leaves us. He understands all about us and our circumstances. He is sufficient for all our needs.

This brings us to verse 13, this amazing verse which so many Christians can quote but know so little about:

4:13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

How could Paul stand and have peace when he was suffering and in need, when he was in persecution? Whatever his circumstances were, it didn't affect this fact that he was enjoying the peace of God; that he was rejoicing in the Savior. "I can do all things," he writes. His sufficiency was found in Christ. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Having the mind of Christ, being in the will of Christ, he could do all things through Christ whatever the circumstances were.

I tell you this is a wonderful thing. Just as Paul could say in Colossians 1:29: "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Or that wonderful verse in 1 Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" as well as 2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Paul manifests the fact of what he could do because of the indwelling Spirit. And one could go to John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Here is a strength experienced because of union with Christ, strength to carry on, strength to be content whatever the outward circumstances are.

I tell you, my friend, we have a wonderful Savior. Can you really say, "I can do all through Christ who strengtheneth me?"

Let me try it out a little bit.

Let's say that someone comes to you in your church or Sunday school and asks you to take a Sunday school class and your first reaction is, "I can't do that."

Why can't you do it?

"Well, I have no gift."

Have you ever tried?

"Well, no, but I know I can't."

Listen, friend. You don't know a thing about this verse, do you? "I can do ALL things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Each one of us brings along his excuse, but we don't have reasons. We're trying to dodge our responsibility. Paul says, "I can do all things."

And we?

Ah, the trouble is, our eyes are not upon Christ. We in some way have not made Him the object of our affection.

The resources that we have in Christ are inestimable, they're eternal, they're complete. You can't measure your resources in Christ. We have strength to carry on whatever the circumstances, strength to be content when we are even in dire need.

I tell you, He's not only my constant joy, as you have in the first five verses. He's not only my peace, whatever the circumstance. But He's my confidence. He's my sufficiency. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. I wish we had time to go into that little verse. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us—and he means just that. Whatever God's will for you is, He never asks you to do anything for Him without providing the necessary equipment and need. Will you remember this? The resources of an infinite God, the resources of a risen, exalted, glorified Savior are your resources.

When I think of some of the frail women who have gone to the different mission fields of the world to prove this very fact, I marvel that they've done some things that even some men couldn't do. One is amazed at the history of Christian missionary activity to find what women have done for God. Frail women have gone into the midst of cannibals, into the midst of headhunters, into the midst of those who hated Christianity. They have gone in quietly and lived before them, lived in their midst and done the impossible. Why? Because of Christ (verse 13).

How do you think these refined women and precious young people in the first three centuries of our era in the Roman empire did it when they were dragged into the Roman amphitheater to be eaten up by wild beasts, to be torn to pieces and to be thrust through with darts, to be cut to pieces by gladiators, to be boiled in oil; to be set on poles and set afire to lighten up the amphitheater. They did it with strength, glorifying the Lord Jesus (verse 13).

You see, the problem is—you say, “Well, Mr. Mitchell, if I had been in the Roman amphitheater, I would have stood.”

Yes. I confess to you it might have been easier to give your life up for Christ as a martyr, and many of them did to get the martyr’s crown. But my friend, sometimes it may be far harder to live for Christ in the midst of a world that has no place for Him. The subtlety of our present generation, the trickery of Satan, the coldness and indifference of people to the Savior, the lukewarmness of many professing Christians, the bickering and fighting among believers—you say, how can a man live under such circumstances?

My friend, you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Do you need wisdom? Do you need strength? What do you need? I repeat the statement that if the Lord has a job for you to do—if His purpose is for you to do certain things—He will always, always provide the necessary equipment to do the job. He can do it. He’s Lord of all. He’s sovereign God.

The nations of the earth are reputed before Him as nothing. All He wants is for you and me to be available for Him to do the job. That’s what Paul is meaning here—I have given myself over to Him. As chapter 3 says: “I count everything but loss just for Him.” Paul became available to God. And being fully available to God, He became one of God’s greatest channels of blessing to the world.

You talk about Hudson Taylor of China. You can talk about Carey of India. You can talk about the great missionary leaders of the world and you have to come to the conclusion that they were just men; they were just women. And I tell you, my friend, I’ve met some very frail women among our missionaries.

When I think of one dear little woman who walked out of China with more than 100 orphans and marched her way through, trusting God. She went through all kinds of circumstances and only God brought them through

into Taiwan. A little bit of a wee woman, a wisp of a woman, she did it because she had her hand on the resources of God.

Oh, that we might believe it, that we might realize that all the power and resources of an infinite God are at your disposal and my disposal. This is what Paul is talking about. (verse 13).

If you look at yourself, and if I look at myself, we'll do nothing. If we get our eyes on others, we'll do nothing. In fact, we might become jealous or envious when we see what they do.

You see, we're just making excuses.

Will you and will I—may we each one—make ourselves available to God? Just today—just today. Yesterday is past. All the yesterdays are past. What about today? I'm not even going to worry about tomorrow. What about today? Will I make myself available to God today to be a channel of blessing, to do all things through Christ who strengthens me?

In fact, I want to tell you, my Christian friends, I wouldn't be here if I didn't know something of the truth of this statement that all the resources of a holy, omnipotent, sovereign God are at the disposal of His people. And the trouble is, we don't come to Him unless we're in a desperate plight. We try anything and everything except Him. We only run to Him when we're at the end of our resources.

Sometimes the Lord just stands to one side until we get there and start to trust Him. Oh, how patient He is; how wonderful He is.

And, friend, even today—can you say with Paul verse 13? If you're looking at your circumstances, remember that Paul had to learn something from experience, that in whatever state he was therewith to be content. Once he got his eyes on the Savior, on His resources, then he could say verse 13.

Now will you read those verses through again? Read in chapter four, the first 13 verses, where he talks about standing fast in the Lord, being of the same mind, rejoicing in the Lord. Let your moderation; let your tenderness and understanding and consideration for other believers be evident because the Lord is at hand.

And then, go on.

In nothing be anxious. Don't fret.

The peace of God is going to garrison your heart and mind through Christ. And remember that the God of peace is with you today. He never leaves you nor forsakes you.

Be content because we can do all things through Christ.
And the Lord bless you today for His name's sake.

Day 48

Philippians 4:14–19

Good-day, friends. As you know we've been discussing the book of Philippians for quite a while, and this dear book which deals with Christian experience.

In chapter 1, Paul wants to live Christ—that “whether by life or by death, Christ be magnified in my body.”

In chapter 2, when the mind of Christ is operating in us, it produces Christian experience.

In chapter 3, “That I might know Christ”—to know Him experimentally. This is Christian experience; to “count everything but loss” just for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” That I might be found in Christ. That I might know Christ.

In chapter 4, he says “I can do all things through Christ.”

We've just been dealing with that here in 4:13, and now we come to another portion that talks about the blessedness of giving. We've just had full peace; full joy; full contentment. This is the secret of real giving as it is found in Christ.

4:14. Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

In other words, he has just been declaring that they would like to have done something but they were hindered, and now, apparently, they found a way of reaching the Apostle Paul. He's in jail; he's in chains; he's facing martyrdom—and from Philippi to Rome they meet his need. They have sent once and again to his necessity; they had him on their hearts and they were going to take care of him. And now he responds to their care. And he says,

4:15. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

4:16. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

4:17. Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

4:18. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

4:19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Now you come to a very, very wonderful passage of scripture. Apparently the apostle Paul has been receiving from these dear saints at Philippi down through his ministry. You remember when he was three weeks with the Thessalonians and had to leave because of the intensity of the persecution. But these dear Philippian Christians took care of him. Now he's in jail and they still want to take care of him but they haven't had the opportunity for quite a while. Then when the opportunity came, they took advantage of it and Epaphroditus, their leader, brought the gift while Paul is in jail. He is so thankful about it.

Have you ever stopped to think that God takes note of our giving to Him and to His work? I wonder how much you and I have in our account in the glory. Do you ever stop to think of it?

This may be an encouragement to some of you. Perhaps your heart was open to give to the Lord's work, and afterwards you find that the gift was not used as you thought it should be. That's all right. The Lord knows the purpose of your heart. He knew your motive and will reward you. He'll put it down to your account in the glory.

I've often times wondered how much you and I have on account in the glory. God doesn't care about your account down here in the bank. What about your account in glory? Paul here says, "Not because I desire a gift: but (because) I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

And then in verse 18 we find a remarkable thing—it is an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Here is a gift given to Paul because of the Philippians' love for Christ and he says it's a sweet smelling sacrifice. It's the evidence of a life given to God. "The things that we've received from you are an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

I wonder if I might read to you from Heb. 13:15 and 16: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

I wonder, my friend, if your gifting is a sweet savor to God. Remember in Romans 12:1, Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." We give our life with its will, with its affections, with its devotions, with all there is—we give it up to God.

You know, we don't know much about giving. I say this very frankly; there are those who believe, "Well, if I give my tenth..."

Well, my friend, you've just come to the standards of the Jews under the law. The legalist will give a tenth. In fact, under the law they gave three tenths. I wonder how much you give as a Christian. Do you give as little as you can or do you give a real sacrifice?

Now I don't know you people, but I know what it says here. And if I might inject this—I rarely ever speak about giving, you know that. I've been preaching in a church for 37 years and I rarely ever mention it. But when it hits you in the passage, I'm going to mention it.

Paul says, Not that I desire a gift. You Philippians have given to me because you love me and because you love the Savior. And you don't even know my condition, whether I'm full or whether I'm empty, but your heart is full of love. You sacrificed and you sent it with Epaphroditus. "Not that I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." And before God it's an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing.

I wonder, my friend, is your giving acceptable to God? Or do you give under pressure? There are many Christians who don't give unless it's under pressure. And some people give so that they might be seen of others.

Do you give because you love Him?

I wonder, my friend, how you give? You know, a friend of mine was the head of a great corporation that had a factory, a plant, a mill, down in

Louisiana, and most of those who were working in the mill were African Americans. The company had built them a number of houses and a little chapel, and they had their own pastor.

And one time this friend of mine who was the head of the corporation went down to this operation in Louisiana with some of the executives of the company. And on Saturday night he said to them, "Now, I want you to go with me to church tomorrow morning to hear Uncle Charlie preach."

And they said, "Sure, we'd like to go hear him."

He said, "All right, if you go I want you to put either a five or a ten dollar bill in the offering." Now this was many, many years ago when a dollar was a dollar, not 25 cents.

So, Sunday morning after breakfast he said, "Are you fellows still wanting to go with me?"

They said, "Yes."

"Be sure you've got a five or a ten dollar bill."

They said, "O.K."

So they went to hear Uncle Charlie. Well, of course, here were the white bosses who came in. Uncle Charlie went through the service and came to the offering and, as the plates were passed, there were nickels and dimes and quarters. And along came the bosses' five and ten dollar bills, and then back to the nickels and dimes.

When Uncle Charlie saw this plate of money, he said, "My brethren, when I'm through preaching this morning, I think we'll take up another offering."

Now you and I may smile at this; but I'm going to tell you, it rejoiced Uncle Charlie's heart. And I'm quoting now the man who told me about it who was there, the one who told the men they must bring their money.

Giving? What do we know about giving? To these men it was no sacrifice. They gave joyfully, but it wasn't really a sacrifice. You see, for some of these people giving ten cents or a quarter might have been a greater sacrifice than the five or ten dollar bill. It's a question of your heart before God. What do you give?

Do we sacrifice? Is it abounding to our account in the glory? Is it a sweet smelling savor unto God?

It is folly for us to say that we are priests unto God, that we would like to come into the presence of God if we do not act as priests. And one of

the acts of a priesthood is sacrifice. And God has given you things; He's made you stewards of what you have. It's not a question of whether I give a tenth or even fifty percent.

The question is, am I giving to the glorifying of our Savior? Am I giving for the furtherance of the Word of God?

And may I say, a word of warning: Be careful where you put your money; be careful where you put it. I think God holds you responsible to put it where Christ has been magnified. You read this passage through again. I'm not through with it—but you read it through and ask yourself, Am I giving because I love Him and do I know that what I give, He takes full account of?

He takes note of it. God sees what you give; God knows what you give and He makes a record of it.

You think about that today, but above all—give yourself.

Give yourself to God, a willing sacrifice.

Make yourself available to God to use today.

And the Lord bless you for His name's sake.

Day 49

Philippians 4:15–19

Good-day, friends. In chapter 4 we have “rejoice in the Lord.” Full joy is found in the Savior who never changes. Then Paul goes on in the passage to speak of full peace, that peace which passes all understanding. Then he talks about full contentment; that rest and the assurance of what we are in Christ. Indeed, I will say the secret of real living is found in Christ.

And this is the thing that disturbs me with many professing Christians. For some reason or other, they have not realized that real life is found in only one place and that's in Jesus Christ. It is not found in the things you have or the things you hope to have. It's not found in material things but in the person of Christ. Real life is made up of fellowship with Him.

We are now the children of God; we're now the heirs of God; we're now bound for eternal glory. Then what should be our daily experience but the enjoyment of divine life. This is the spiritual life. It's not necessarily some great experience or some ecstatic utterance, but rather the enjoyment of a person, and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ. And we have had in this 4th chapter of the book of Philippians this wonderful fact that we have full joy and full peace and full contentment in Christ.

Now he begins to talk about the full supply that we have in Him. And in our last message we were discussing this question of the blessedness of giving in verses 15–19.

And you notice that Paul in verse 17, as we were discussing in our last lesson, Paul didn't need anything.

4:17. Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

This is an acceptable sacrifice before God. As I said in our last lesson, I've often wondered if in our giving, we, as Christians, realize that as we give God notices it.

You know, He sees our frailty and He also sees our capacity even in giving. God never asks you for something you do not have. And I'm sure we ought to obey the injunction of the Corinthian church where Paul says of the Macedonian Christians that they gave first of all of themselves to the Lord and then of their substance.

And you have it here. When other churches were not supporting or standing by Paul while he was in prison, the Philippian church did. And by the way, these Philippians knew something of suffering; they knew something of persecution. They could appreciate, at least in a small way, what Paul was going through in Rome as he was chained to Roman soldiers. And they must have known that he had great need. And so they sent to him again and again, and Paul says, “I know how to abound: I know how to be hungry.”

He had learned that in whatever state he was therewith to be content. But he did want them to have fruit that would abound to their account in the glory. And then in verse 18 he took up the question: Your giving is an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. In fact, your giving is an evidence of a life given to God—as Rom. 12:1 says.

And I’m going to say this—I think there are a great many Christians who give the least they can get away with. They have to give something, so they give; but there’s no joy, there’s no blessing in their giving. And I would appeal to your heart that, if you love the Savior, you give because you love Him. I’m not asking you how much you should give, but you give because you love Him. Even if you may not understand all that your gift is used for, if you’re giving because you love Him, it’s going to abound to your account in the glory.

And then we have in verse 19, constant supply. It may be well for me to read verse 18 again to pick up the connection:

4:18. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

4:19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Did you ever think of the unlimited supply you have, Christian friend? “My God,” says Paul, “shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory.” Paul is saying, “I haven’t anything to give you, but my God can supply all your need.” He will supply because He’s God; every need will be supplied. But, by the way, let God be the judge of the need.

You remember, in chapter 1 of Ephesians, we have the riches of His grace. In chapter 2 we have the riches of His mercy. God who is rich in mercy and great in love. And in chapter 3, the riches of His glory and the unsearchable riches in Christ. You see, redemption, forgiveness,

relationship, life come through the grace of God, but my present need—God is doing something for me *now* and He's meeting my needs according to His riches in glory.

Tell me, how rich is God? How rich is your Savior? You remember Hebrews 1:2, we read that the Lord Jesus Christ is the heir of all things. That He is the upholder of all things. He owns everything—and all of God's vast universe belongs to Him. These are your riches in glory, my friend—riches of grace.

And I'm repeating what I said in Ephesians: riches of grace proceed from the cross. All that you and I need to stand before God is on the ground of the riches of His grace.

Revel in it. Your forgiveness, justification, your standing before God, your relationship to God, the question of eternal life, the question of eternal glory, the question of spending eternity in the presence of God are all on the ground of the grace of God. You and I couldn't do a thing. We were dead in trespasses and sins.

And, my friend, if you love the Savior, if you've trusted Him as the One who put away your sins, you've accepted Him as your Savior—my friend, all that you need to stand before God acceptable is on the ground of His grace. Not grace plus your faithfulness, not grace by what you hope to do, but entirely, pure sovereign grace.

The riches of His mercy; the greatness of His love. This has to do with my position standing in the presence of God. I am sure, just as sure of eternal glory as I am that Christ Jesus died and rose again from the dead. This is the riches of grace.

Now I'm down here in frailty. I'm here on the earth in a body that has desires, tests and trials and temptations. In my service for the Lord and your service for the Lord sometimes we feel so inadequate to do what we see must be done.

Now how is my present need, day by day—how is it going to be met? And Paul here is saying,

4:19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Now, you're going to say to me, Well, is He talking here only about money? No, no, indeed. You remember in chapter 3 of Ephesians the second prayer of Paul, verse 16, where he prays that we might be made powerfully

strong according to His riches in glory. And where are we to be made powerfully strong? In the inner man by the Spirit of God who indwells us.

All that I need as a Christian to live on the earth, to serve Him, to be a testimony for Him, I have found in an unlimited supply of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Oh, I wish in some way I could put this into words that you would lay hold of it. And I wish I could put into words the way I feel about this—that our God is big enough and He is sufficient enough to meet your individual need.

Listen, Christian friend, if you have trusted the Savior and you're a child of God, you can come into His presence and cry, Abba, Father—He's my Father—and He has everything I need. I may only be a babe in Christ. I may be a Christian who's been on the way for years. But whatever my need for peace, for rest, for safety, for anything that I need before God, I find in Christ.

You know, speaking of material things—I have met people whose whole life is wrapped up getting material things. They're not happy. They will never be completely happy or satisfied until they are in Christ Jesus.

Christian friend, do not be distracted from the person of Christ by material gain, by your material possessions. These things oftentimes—indeed, I'm going to make it very blunt—most of the time these things hinder your enjoying the riches of the grace of the glory that's in Christ Jesus.

Do you have a need today? Why not go to Him and talk about it?

“Oh, but Mr. Mitchell, my need is so small.”

Well, you are the object of His love. You are the object of His devotion. He's more interested in you, even in the small things of your life, than you could ever believe or realize.

Why not just bring it to Him today?

Remember, He's rich in grace; He's rich in mercy; but He's also rich in glory, and that's for you today.

Pull on your resources today and magnify your Savior for His name's sake.

Day 50

Philippians 4:17–19

Good-day, friends. We come now to the end of the book of Philippians. We were discussing in our last lesson the marvelous riches of glory. What I need for full joy, for full peace, for full contentment, I find in the riches of His glory. I find that He wants us to be made powerfully strong according to His riches in glory. And, again, may I repeat it: All that I need to stand before God proceeds from the cross. This is the riches of His grace.

But for my present daily need, my riches come from the throne. The Lord Jesus is no longer on the cross; He's no longer in the tomb, He's on the throne. He's heir of all things, pre-eminent, Lord over all. He's all for you and He's all for me, for "my God shall supply all your needs." I say, is it not a wonderful thing—the unlimited supply for His people of "the riches of glory by Christ Jesus?"

Oh, friend, may I say to you, draw today on His riches of glory. If I'm talking to any who are sinners, my friend, (I only ask this at this point because some readers begin at the back of the book) the grace of God which proceeds from the cross is sufficient to transform you from a child of wrath into a child of God, from a sinner into a saint of God, from one who was afar off to one who is made nigh by the blood of Christ. His grace is sufficient for one who is dead in sins. It makes him/her now eternally alive in Christ. Oh, wonder of wonders!

But now you say, "Mr. Mitchell, I'm frail. I've taken Christ as my Savior, but I fail God so much of the time; and I lack all this rest and peace you've been talking about."

That's because you've been trying to find it some other way. Some people are trusting their wealth. Wealth will not give you peace. Wealth will not give you real, lasting joy. Wealth will not give you that confidence, that contentment that the Apostle Paul said is "great gain."

I tell you it's a wonderful thing to know that you can have a contentment and a peace and a joy that's beyond the understanding of men by drawing on the supply that you have of the riches of glory by Christ Jesus.

Now I'm stopping here because I do know in dealing with hundreds of people that a great many real believers in Christ, because of the roughness of the path, because of their circumstances, have never experienced very much of the peace and the satisfaction and contentment that is found in Jesus Christ. It's a strange thing—we run anywhere and everywhere but to Him. We trust ourselves before we trust the Savior. We will trust our eternal souls to Christ, but we'll not trust Him for the next 24 hours for our daily need of peace and rest and contentment.

You see, we try to find this in things that don't satisfy. The more you get, the more you want. The more you have, the more you want; and you're not satisfied. You go from one thing to another trying to find satisfaction. This is what the world does; it runs from one thing to another on a continual cycle from one thing to another and is never satisfied. Unbelievers never have real peace and are never totally content. But now for the Christian—"my God shall supply all your need."

The question is, will you come and trust Him and rest in Him? What do you need? What do you need in your life? Well, whatever the need is, my friend, why not tell Him? Why not come to Him?

You say, "But He can't supply my need."

It says here, "My God will supply ALL your needs." It's a question of appropriation.

How much do you love Him?

How much do you trust Him?

Is your God big enough to meet your need?

Is your God sufficient enough to give you peace and rest and contentment even in the face of affliction?

In the face of suffering?

In the face of sorrow?

In the hour of death?

Does my God and your God supply your need and give you rest and peace in the midst of it all?

Of course He can.

Someone asked the question, "How big is God?"

Well, our God is a sovereign God. He has all authority in heaven and in earth. He's able; He's sufficient. His resources are unlimited for every one of His own people.

I know I'm repeating this; I'm deliberately repeating it, because for some reason or other you know it theoretically. You know it doctrinally. But has it ever really gotten a hold of your heart and my heart that your Savior and my Savior is not only sufficient to fit us for eternal glory, but his work is sufficient to transform us into the children of One who is God and to guarantee eternal glory.

You say, Amen, I believe that.

Can He supply your next 24 hours of need?

You know—I'm going to say this—if there's any verse in the Bible that has been a real blessing to my heart and a comfort, it is that verse in Psalm 103:14 that says, "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." He never forgets that.

I do.

So do you.

We forget how frail we are.

We forget that we are the objects of His grace and of His mercy.

We forget our weaknesses.

We say we're sufficient for these things.

We're not—absolutely not.

Why are more people not saved? Because they're trusting themselves. They can't come to the place where they realize that they themselves can't do anything; God must do it. Remember, the salvation we have starts in God, is continued by God, is going to be completed by God.

What God wants us to do is not only to trust Him, but to revel in Him, to enjoy the life He has given to us and then to display before the world this wonderful love, this wonderful grace, this wonderful devotion that God has for men.

I tell you again, God is going to populate heaven with people; but those people must be redeemed, they must be cleansed, they must be forgiven, they must be fitted for God's presence; and God has made the provision.

Now if you want to be one of those who shall populate heaven, you've got to come God's way; and God has made the way and there's only one way. Jesus said, "I am the way. No man cometh to the Father but by me." "There's no other door; there's no other name under heaven given among

men whereby we must be saved.” What I’m trying to tell you, my friend, is all that you need to stand in the presence of God is found in Jesus Christ.

I pray that the Lord will make this clear to you today. Read and re-read these verses, especially verses 17, 18, 19.

4:17. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

4:18. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

4:19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

And so Paul ends this book on Christian experience. God has made the provision for you and me to enjoy divine life today.

Now again may I ask in closing, my Christian friend, do you want a full life?

Do you want full joy?

Do you want to experience that peace that passeth understanding?

Do you want to live a life of contentment?

You’ll find it in only one place—real life and contentment are found only in Christ.

I’m well aware of a great many doctrines floating around today, but may I suggest to you that Christian experience—real Christian experience—is the enjoyment of Christ; the enjoyment of divine life. He is our life. And as I let Him live out His life through me, then I enjoy that wonderful peace, that wonderful contentment of being in the hands of a living God who can supply every need.

Now may your own heart and my heart today be filled with love for and devotion to this wonderful Savior who has done so much for us.

But remember, your supply is unlimited in Christ.

May the Lord bless you today for His name’s sake.

Day 51

Philippians 4:20–23

Good-day, friends. We've been spending quite a bit of time on this last chapter, and the reason for it is that it is a wonderful illustration of what the real Christian life and experience is. It's a life of full joy. We are to rejoice in the Lord always. He is the ground of our joy.

He goes on to speak about a perfect peace, the peace of God which passes understanding that shall garrison your heart and your mind through Christ Jesus. Then he talks about the life that is fully content in Christ. And then he talks about the blessedness of giving, and we were discussing in our last lesson this 19th verse again:

4:19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

4:20. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

And may I close this book of Philippians today with this wonderful keynote: All the riches that you and I need are within reach, and we're finding them in Christ Jesus. The source of supply is in Christ.

You remember, in Colossians 2:3: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Think of it! All that I need of wisdom, of joy, of peace, of strength—all that I need is found in Him, the unlimited supply of the grace of God and the grace of glory. The riches of glory are for the believer in Christ Jesus.

You know, I think every one of us will remember a verse in the Old Testament. In fact, it is one of the first verses we teach children in Sunday school; and I'm thinking of the 23rd Psalm, the 1st verse. Remember it? "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Or as the little fellow said in Sunday school class, "The Lord is my shepherd. I should worry?"

My God shall supply all your needs. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. And He expands that. "He leadeth me beside the still waters." He leads us to the green pastures and we lie down, our hunger satisfied. This is Philippians 4. We have peace and contentment. He restores our soul even when we fail Him. He forgives us and cleanses us and leads us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Contentment, satisfaction—though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil.

Why? Thou art with me.

What do I need? Comfort.

What do I need? Peace of heart and peace of mind.

And He is with me. His rod and staff comfort me. He has already defeated death, and not one child of God goes through this experience of death without the Savior right there with Him.

My, what a wonderful thing to know that the Lord of life; the Lord over all resurrection; the Lord of glory, is with us whatever the hour, whatever the affliction, whatever the circumstance.

And even when I get bruised on the way, who is it who puts oil upon my head? He does. My shepherd. My head with oil He anoints. My cup runs over. Goodness and mercy, these twins, shall follow me—shall chase after me, all the days of my life.

And then the wonderful assurance, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” The 23rd Psalm. Read it with the 4th chapter of Philippians. Full joy, full peace, full contentment. Even my very giving He takes note of and He’s willing—able—to supply any need that I may have.

Now before I close this book of Philippians I would like you to notice one more thing here, reading verses 21-23, the last three verses of the book.

4:21. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

There were some in prison with him.

4:22. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.

Now he’s writing from Rome. Remember this—he’s a prisoner in Rome. And why do you think Paul was a prisoner in Rome? Why? You remember in the first chapter the Apostle Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, whether out of contention or in love. As long as people heard about his Savior he would rejoice. What’s the result?

4:22. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.

Did you ever stop to think one of the reasons why God permitted the Apostle Paul to be a prisoner, to be chained to Roman soldiers? My friend, God had some people there He wanted to save. How were they going to be reached? Certainly they wouldn’t go down to the little church at Rome—in a house more than likely. No. God takes a prisoner by the name of Paul right into the very palace of Caesar. He’s chained to Roman soldiers.

Can't you visualize this?

Here is a change of the guard; and, if the guard is changed, here are some new guards he has never seen before, and his heart would jump for joy.

“Here are some people going to be chained to me,” he says. “They can't get away from me. I'm chained to them and I'm going to discuss with them, give them the good news from God to their hearts—that God has provided a Savior.” Can't you hear him saying that joyfully?

God has made provision to cleanse them from sin. God has made the provision whereby they can become children of the living God and spend eternity in the presence of God. How do you think these people in Caesar's household heard the gospel? Through a man who was full of joy.

Don't you forget that when Paul wrote the fourth chapter of Philippians he was in jail, and, when he talks to these Philippians about wonderful peace and wonderful joy and wonderful contentment, he was experiencing that in jail.

You know, it makes me hang my head in shame. Not only for myself but for God's people. How we grumble and we growl if our circumstances are not what we think they ought to be. We blame God for it. Shame on us.

Here is a man chained to Roman soldiers. He's not a free man in the sense of physical freeness. Every day the guard is changed and possibly some of these would be the praetorian guard—the select men of Caesar's household chained to a prisoner. And how Paul thanked God for these chains. He had brought them who were of Caesar's household to hear the gospel of God's wonderful grace. I tell you, it's an amazing thing.

Now I can understand a little wee bit of this book of Philippians. In chapter 1, he wrote—may I repeat it?

1:20. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

1:21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

“If I'm going to be martyred for the gospel,” he is saying, “I'll rejoice because Christ is going to be glorified. If I'm going to be chained in prison, I'll rejoice because through this very thing, these very circumstances, those of Caesar's household are hearing the gospel. Whatever the cost may be, let it be as long as Christ is magnified.

“And I take the very tests of life, the very afflictions and misunderstandings of life, the very sufferings of life, the very sorrows of life, and see that they’re used for the glory of Christ in my life.”

And in chapter 2 that humility and meekness of the Savior were manifested in Paul and in Timothy and Epaphroditus. And, my friend, if these men of the first century could glorify God in their bodies in the midst of the circumstances and things through which they went, there is no excuse for you and me.

I don’t care what your circumstances are. They could possibly be worse than mine. I know they could. And yet, whatever our circumstances, whatever the situation may be, remember He’s the God over all. He loves you and He wants you to enjoy His power and His presence and His blessing and His peace and contentment in the midst of it all.

Then in chapter 3 he could say:

3:8. I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.

All things—good things, bad things—just to know Christ, just to win Christ, to be found in Christ. I tell you, what a passion this man had. Even the very good things of life which would hinder his knowing Christ he’s willing to put to one side just to know Christ.

Now we come to the last chapter

4:13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

4:19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Oh, read and re-read this wonderful book of Philippians. It is the book of Christian experience.

And I trust that even today you will have a joy in Christ you never had before, and a peace that passes all understanding and a contentment even in the midst of your afflictions and hard and sad circumstances. The Lord Jesus can come into your life and give you that contentment and that peace and that strength that’s beyond the understanding of men.

I tell you, Christian friend, we’ve got a wonderful Savior. He’s made marvelous provision for your daily, hourly needs. And again I say, if you can trust the Lord with your eternal home for eternity, surely you can trust Him for the next 24 hours, whatever your circumstance may be.

Live for Him. Don't growl about what's going to happen tomorrow. You live today for the Savior. Enjoy the riches of glory in Christ Jesus and may you and I be available to God to be His channel of blessing to some heart today.

Who knows—who knows? God may use you and me in some precious soul today who will pass from death to life, who will pass out of darkness into light, who will be transformed from a sinner, from a child of wrath, into a child of God reveling in the Savior.

Who knows? God can use you.

You say, "Mr. Mitchell, I have no gift."

I'm not talking about gifts. All I want, and I'm sure all God wants, is a channel. He'll do it. He's got the supply. He has the ability. He has the power. He has all that is necessary. All He wants is a channel. He's got to use men and women whom He has redeemed with His own blood.

And I just plead with your heart today, make yourself available to God, will you? Is that asking too much?

Just say, "Father, I'm going to give myself to You to be available, to be used by the Son of God, to be a channel of blessing to some heart today." He asks for just a kind act, just a kind word, just an understanding spirit.

You may never know it—you may never know it, but that kind word, that kind deed can mean so much to people in their condition. You may not even know their condition, but God does; and He's picked you as a vessel of honor to be used in that person's life today.

May you draw on Him.

Remember, "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

And may the Lord wonderfully bless you as you re-read the book of Philippians today.