

Message Two

Knowing and Experiencing Christ as the Pattern

Scripture Reading: Phil. 2:3-9; 1:19-21a

I. If we would know Christ as the pattern, we should let the mind which was in Christ Jesus be in us—Phil. 2:5:

- A. We need to take Christ's mind as our mind, opening ourselves to "let this mind" be in us—vv. 3-5:
 - 1. *This* in verse 5 refers to the considering in verse 3 and the regarding in verse 4.
 - 2. Lowliness of mind is in contrast to both selfish ambition and vainglory (v. 3); this must not be our natural lowliness but the lowliness of Christ (v. 8).
 - 3. This kind of mind, this kind of thinking, was in Christ when He emptied Himself and humbled Himself—vv. 7-8.
- B. To have "this mind" requires us to be one with Christ in His inward parts, in His tender, inward feeling and in His thinking—1:8.
- C. For the mind of Christ to be in us means that this mind is something living; actually, the mind of Christ is Christ Himself, for the person of Christ is manifested in His mind—2:5; cf. 1 Cor. 2:16, footnote 1.

II. In order to experience Christ, we need to know Him as the pattern—Phil. 2:5-9:

- A. In Philippians 2:5-9 Paul presents Christ as the pattern; we need to have this pattern infused into us.
- B. The pattern of the Christian life is the God-man Savior, who emptied Himself and humbled Himself and who has been exalted and glorified by God—vv. 6-9:
 - 1. Although the Lord was equal with God, He did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped and retained; rather, He emptied Himself, laying aside what He possessed—the form of God—vv. 6-7a:
 - a. In His incarnation the Lord did not alter His divine nature.
 - b. He changed only the outward expression, from the form of God to the form of a slave.
 - 2. The Lord became "in the likeness of men"—vv. 7b-8a:
 - a. *The form of God* implies the inward reality of Christ's deity; *the likeness of men* denotes the outward appearance of His humanity—vv. 6-7.
 - b. He appeared to men as a man outwardly, but as God, He had the reality of deity inwardly—John 1:1, 14, 18; 3:16; Rom. 8:3.
 - c. Christ entered into the condition of humanity, and He was found in fashion as a man—Phil. 2:8a.
 - 3. Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient even unto death—the death of a cross—v. 8b:
 - a. Humbling Himself was a further step in emptying Himself.
 - b. Christ's self-humbling manifested His self-emptying—vv. 7-8.
 - c. The death of a cross was the climax of Christ's humiliation.

4. The Son willingly emptied Himself to become a created man as the representation of submission to authority—vv. 6-8:
 - a. The Lord Jesus set His heart to subject Himself to the way of submission, even unto death—Isa. 50:7; Luke 9:51; Mark 10:31-34.
 - b. “Even though He was a Son,” the Lord “learned obedience from the things which He suffered”—Heb. 5:8:
 - (1) God ordained that Christ should die, and Christ obeyed—Phil. 2:8.
 - (2) He learned this obedience through the suffering of death.
 - c. The Lord, who was submissive throughout His life, has given us His life of submission; a believer’s obedience is a consequence of taking Christ as a pattern of obedience—v. 8; Col. 3:4.
5. The Lord humbled Himself to the uttermost, but God exalted Him to the highest peak and bestowed on Him “the name which is above every name”—Phil. 2:9.

III. There is an urgent need among us in the Lord’s recovery today to experience Christ as our pattern—vv. 3-8:

- A. Christ as our pattern is not only objective but also subjective and experiential; the One who set up the pattern and who Himself is the pattern is now operating within us as the indwelling God—vv. 5, 12-13.
- B. The principle of Christ as the inward pattern for our living is that even if we have the highest standard or the highest position, we should not grasp it—vv. 3-6.
- C. We need to live Christ in His human living, especially in His emptying Himself and humbling Himself and in His not grasping equality with God as a treasure—1:20-21a; 2:6:
 1. We have a life in us that is self-emptying and self-humbling.
 2. This life never grasps at something as a treasure but is always willing to lay aside position and title—vv. 3-6.
- D. We have Christ crucified as our pattern, and this pattern is the crucified life within us—1 Cor. 1:23a; 2:2; Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 6:14:
 1. The steps of Christ’s humiliation in Philippians 2:5-8 are aspects of the crucified life lived out in a full way.
 2. Christ’s being obedient unto the death of the cross was the crucified life lived out in a full and absolute way—v. 8.
 3. When we live Christ, we live the One who is the pattern of a crucified life—1:21a; 1 Cor. 2:2.
 4. By living a crucified life, we can experience the power of resurrection—Phil. 3:10a; Eph. 1:19-22.
 5. The highest life on earth is a crucified life; whenever we live a crucified life, God will bring us into resurrection—Phil. 3:10-11.
 6. Christ is exalted in our daily life as we, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, take Him as the crucified life to be the pattern of our daily life—2:5; 1:19-21a.