

Message Four

Abiding in Christ as the Empowering One— the Secret of Experiencing Christ

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:12-13;
John 14:23; 15:4-5; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:24; 4:13; Rev. 21:3, 22

I. We need to learn the secret of being in Christ as the empowering One:

- A. In Philippians 4:12-13 Paul says, “I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me”:
1. The phrase *learned the secret* indicates that Paul had come into a new situation, a new environment; whenever we are put in a new environment, we need to learn the secret of living in that environment:
 - a. *I have learned the secret* literally means “I have been initiated”; the metaphor here refers to a person’s being initiated into a secret society with instruction in its rudimentary principles.
 - b. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was initiated into Christ and into the Body of Christ.
 - c. He then learned the secret of how to take Christ as life, how to live Christ, how to magnify Christ, how to gain Christ, and how to have the church life, all of which things are rudimentary principles.
 2. *In everything* means in each matter; *in all things* means in all matters; together, these two phrases encompass all the things in the course of human life.
 3. Paul learned the secret of experiencing Christ in everything and in every place; this is also the secret of having more of Christ accumulated within us.
 4. The secret is in Philippians 4:13: “I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me”:
 - a. Paul was a man in Christ (2 Cor. 12:2), and he desired to be found in Christ by others; now he declared that he was able to do all things in Him, the very Christ who empowered him:
 - (1) This is an all-inclusive and concluding word on his experience of Christ; it is the converse of the Lord’s word in John 15:5 concerning our organic relationship with Him: “Apart from Me you can do nothing.”
 - (2) The Greek word for *empowers* means “makes dynamic inwardly.”
 - (3) Christ dwells in us (Col. 1:27); He empowers us, makes us dynamic from within, not from without; by such inward empowering Paul was able to do all things in Christ.
 - b. Paul had been altogether in the Jewish religion under the law and had always been found by others in the law, but at his conversion he was transferred from the law and his former religion into Christ and became “a man in Christ”—2 Cor. 12:2.
 - c. Now he expected to be found in Christ by all who observed him—the Jews, the angels, and the demons; this indicates that he aspired to have his whole being immersed in and saturated with Christ that all who observed him might find him fully in Christ; only when we are found in Christ, will Christ be expressed and magnified—Phil. 3:9a; 1:20.
- B. On the one hand, by the empowering of Christ, we can live a contented life (4:11-12); on the other hand, by the empowering of Christ, we can be true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and well spoken of (v. 8).

C. Paul's word about Christ as the empowering One specifically applies to Christ's empowering us to live Him as our human virtues and thereby to magnify Him in His unlimited greatness; to live a life of these virtues is much more difficult than doing a Christian work.

II. To learn the secret of being in Christ as the empowering One is to learn the secret of abiding in Christ; to abide in Christ is to dwell in Him, to remain in fellowship with Him, that we may experience and enjoy His abiding in us—John 15:4-5; 1 John 2:27:

A. To abide in Christ is to live in the Divine Trinity—taking Christ as our dwelling place—vv. 6, 24, 27-28; 3:6, 24; 4:13:

1. To abide in Christ is to abide in the Son and in the Father (2:24); this is to remain and dwell in the Lord (John 15:4-5).
2. To abide in Christ is to abide in the fellowship of the divine life and to walk in the divine light, that is, to abide in the divine light—1 John 1:2-3, 6-7; 2:10.

B. To have Christ abiding in us is to live with the Divine Trinity—having Christ's presence as our enjoyment for Him to be one with us and to be with every part of our being and every aspect of our living—Matt. 1:23; 18:20; 28:20; 2 Tim. 4:22; 2 Cor. 2:10; 1 Cor. 7:24:

1. To have Christ abiding in us is to have the words of Christ abiding in us for the bearing of remaining fruit to glorify the Father—John 15:7-8, 16.
2. To have Christ abiding in us is to have the Spirit of reality as the presence of the Triune God abiding in us—14:17.

III. We need to abide in Christ as our King and as our royal abode so that He can abide in us to make us His queen and His royal palace, His glorious church—Psa. 45:13, 8; John 15:4-5; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 22:5; Rom. 5:17; cf. S. S. 6:4:

A. To abide in Christ is to dwell in Him, the eternal God, as our Lord, having our living in Him and taking Him as our everything—John 15:4-5; 1 John 4:15-16; Rev. 21:22; Deut. 33:27a; Psa. 90.

B. We need to dwell in God, living in Him every minute, for outside of Him there are sins and afflictions—vv. 3-11; John 16:33.

C. To take God as our habitation, our eternal dwelling place, is the highest and fullest experience of God—Psa. 91.

IV. To abide in Christ, taking Him as our dwelling place, and to allow Him to abide in us, taking us as His dwelling place, is to live in the reality of the universal incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the redeemed and regenerated believers—John 14:2, 10-11, 17, 20, 23:

A. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified tripartite church—Rev. 21:3, 22.

B. The New Jerusalem is the tabernacle of God, and the center of the tabernacle is Christ as the hidden manna; the way to be incorporated into this universal, divine-human incorporation, the mutual abode of God and man, is to eat Christ as the hidden manna—v. 3; Exo. 16:32-34; Heb. 9:4; Rev. 2:17.

V. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by loving Him—John 14:21, 23:

A. When we love the Lord Jesus, He manifests Himself to us, and the Father comes with Him to make an abode with us for our enjoyment; this abode is a mutual abode, in which the Triune God abides in us and we abide in Him—v. 23.

- B. The more we love the Lord, the more we will have His presence, and the more we are in His presence, the more we will enjoy all that He is to us; the Lord's recovery is a recovery of loving the Lord Jesus—1 Cor. 2:9-10; Eph. 6:24.

VI. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by caring for the inward teaching of the all-inclusive anointing—1 John 2:27:

- A. We abide in the divine fellowship with Christ by experiencing the cleansing of the Lord's blood and the application of the anointing Spirit to our inner being—John 15:4-5; 1 John 1:5, 7; 2:20, 27.
- B. Christ as the Head is the anointed One and the anointing One, and we are His members enjoying Him as the inner anointing for the fulfillment of His purpose—Heb. 1:9; 3:14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22.
- C. The anointing, as the moving and working of the compound Spirit within us, anoints God into us so that we may be saturated with God, possess God, and understand the mind of God; the anointing communicates the mind of Christ as the Head of the Body to His members by the inner sense, the inner consciousness, of life—Psa. 133; 1 Cor. 2:16; Rom. 8:6, 27.
- D. When the Head wants a member of the Body to move, He intimates it through the inner anointing, and as we yield to the anointing, life flows freely from the Head to us; if we resist the anointing, our relationship with the Head is interfered with, and the flow of life within us is stopped—Col. 2:19.
- E. The teaching of the anointing of the Spirit has nothing to do with right or wrong; it is an inner sense of life—Acts 16:6-7; 2 Cor. 2:13.
- F. If our natural life is dealt with by the cross and if we submit to the headship of Christ and live the Body life, we will have the Spirit's anointing and enjoy the fellowship of the Body—Eph. 4:3-6, 15-16.

VII. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by "switching on" the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit—Rom. 8:2, 4:

- A. The Lord's abiding in us and our abiding in Him are altogether a matter of Him being the life-giving Spirit in our spirit; by the bountiful, immeasurable Spirit in our spirit, we know with full assurance that we and God are one and that we abide in each other—1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 1:19; John 3:34; 1 John 3:24; 4:13.
- B. The way to abide in Christ as the empowering One so that He may be activated within us as the inner operating God, the law of the Spirit of life, is by rejoicing always, praying unceasingly, and giving thanks in everything—Phil. 4:13; 2:13; 1 Thes. 5:16-18; Col. 3:17.

VIII. We abide in Christ so that He may abide in us by dealing with the constant word in the Scriptures, which is outside of us, and the present word as the Spirit, which is within us—John 5:39-40; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rev. 2:7:

- A. By the outward, written word we have the explanation, definition, and expression of the mysterious Lord, and by the inward, living word we have the experience of the abiding Christ and the presence of the practical Lord—Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18.
- B. If we abide in the Lord's constant and written word, His instant and living words will abide in us—John 8:31; 15:7; 1 John 2:14.
- C. We abide in Him and His words abide in us so that we may speak in Him and He may speak in us for the building of God into man and man into God—John 15:7; 2 Cor. 2:17; 13:3; 1 Cor. 14:4b.